

Mexican Life

Mexico's Monthly Review

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AUGUST, 1950

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Mexican Life

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June 1, 1950

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Editor, "Mexican Life"
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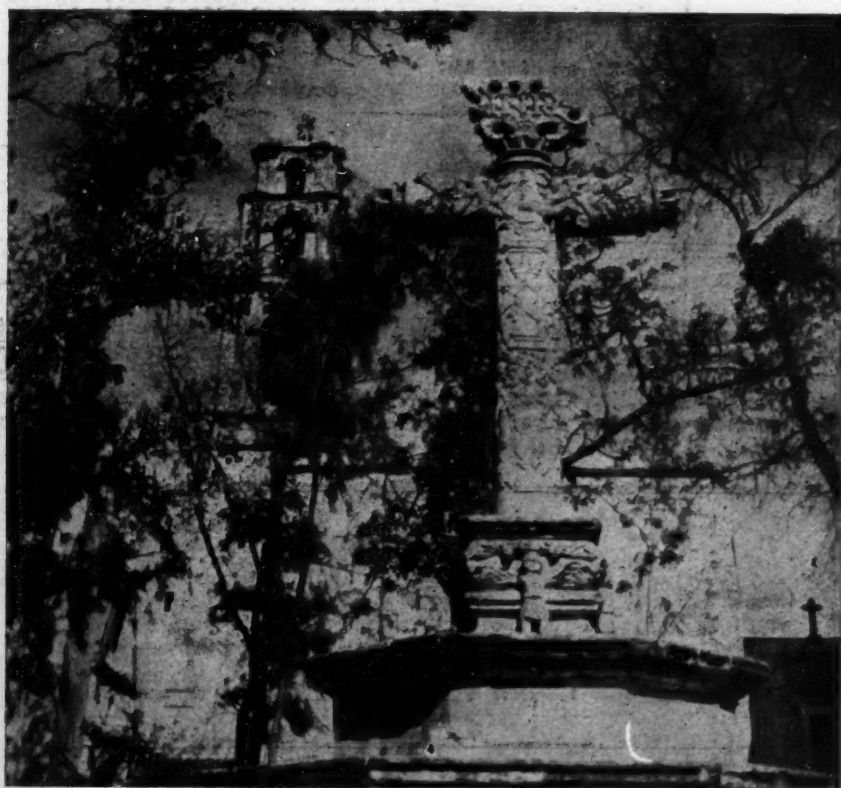
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Mexican Life

Uruguay No. 3 Mexico City

Telephone: 12-59-78

Published on: the first day of every month.

Registrado como Artículo de 2a. Clase el 22 de Octubre de 1927

Number 8

Volume XXVI

August 1st. 1950

HOWARD S. PHILLIPS
EDITOR

End of the Dollar Shortage

MEXICO'S economic situation presents at this time a somewhat confusing panorama, due to the fact that while its international trade still leaves an unfavorable balance, the reserve of dollars held by the Bank of Mexico has been increasing from month to month. This phenomenon has been attributed to the invisible influx of dollars, largely accountable to tourist expenditures and to important remittances of private capital. The dollar influx has been especially notable during the last two months, or since the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, reaching its peak of 25 million dollars in the final week of last month.

This process, however, has been developing gradually during the foregone twelve months, or since the official restriction of non-essential imports and the devaluation of the peso in its dollar exchange value. These measures produced the desired results of curtailing the outflow of dollars, and at the same of stimulating their invisible influx.

It was during the foregone year that Mexico emerged from an extremely difficult situation brought on by a continuous depletion of its dollar reserve. In 1947 its international trade represented an adverse balance of 129.1 million dollars. In 1948, the loss was reduced to 53 million dollars. In 1949 the balance was 38 million dollars in Mexico's favor. While the excess of imports over exports was reduced from 170.1 million dollars in 1948 to 125.5 million last year, income from all the invisible export sources more than made up for it, giving the country a favorable trade balance for the first since the end of the war.

Tourist traffic has contributed the most important share to this revenue, representing 133.7 million dollars last year, against 104.1 million in 1948. This traffic contributed more than 70 percent of all invisible exports.

It is safe to assume that with prevalent world conditions the dollar influx is more than likely to continue, eventually creating an exchange reserve sufficiently ample to enable the government to suspend import bans on some of the goods now classed as non-essential. Such a measure will probably become necessary in order to provide an outflow for surplus dollars and to prevent further price inflation.

Whichever the case, an abundant dollar reserve is not likely to upset Mexico's economic stability, even if it should eventually compel the government to set a new peso-dollar rate of exchange. Obviously, the absorption of additional capital must strengthen

rather than weaken the nation's economy. Moreover Mexico is today much less dependent upon foreign trade than it was several years ago. Its rapid economic development has brought it much closer to the goal of self-sufficiency.

During 1949 the volume of national production reached the highest level in the country's history. National income during that year amounted to 25 billion 600 million pesos, against 22 billion, 800 million pesos in 1948. The following factors have contributed to this notable increase:

In agriculture, the unfavorable conditions caused by local drouths, price decline in domestic and foreign markets and increased production costs, have been more than offset by the crops obtained in the new irrigated areas. The income of the cattle breeding industry was greatly increased by the rise in production and market prices.

In mining, the volume and value of production rose considerably due to peso devaluation, which more than counterbalanced the decline in prices of metals in international markets.

The petroleum industry enlarged its production volume of crude oil from an average of 160,000 barrels a day to well over 200,000 barrels.

Electrical power production increased in volume and value, despite the increase in costs.

The total investment made in the building industry represented a rise of 20 percent over that of the previous year.

The manufacturing industries, aided by expanding domestic and foreign markets, were able to enlarge their production volume as well as the number of employed workmen.

The prosperous state of the nation's economy was clearly reflected in the volume of Federal income, which not only sufficed to cover a considerably amplified budget but produced a surplus of 120.9 million pesos.

The above facts attest an expanding economy, or an accelerated growth in national production as well as consumption, a material progress which is preserving an undiminished momentum.

Nothing, in fact, demonstrates more eloquently Mexico's healthy economic state than the invisible influx of dollars which in recent weeks has assumed such dramatic proportions. For while it might be accepted as a symptom of war-fright, it also denotes a confidence in Mexico's safe and stable situation.

A Victorian Print

By Henry Albert Phillips

THE Teatro Fabregas had long been Mexico City's "Family Theater." We had similar houses in New York in the Nineties under German influence, but they have long since disappeared. The Fabregas remained, then, like a pretty Continental-Victorian casket filled with faded memories and odors of an oldtime Mexico whose design was but a faint tracery on the walls of time. Its capacity was only nine hundred; an orchestra with blue velvet seats, a tier of loges, a balcony and a shallow gallery, decorated in green and gold. The curtain was a mass of advertisements, all comically illustrated, in the Paris manner. Our loge was unlocked, Continental fashion, by an old duenna in black, who received her conventional tip. The occupants of the stage box opposite might have been placed there by collusion in order to complete the illusion of a Victorian print. They seemed to be "Mamma," "Auntie" and two incredible children. "Mamma" was a pure peroxide blonde, her yellow curls, held on by a regal tiara, dripped conquetishly down over her buxom bare shoulders. "Auntie" wore a voluminous green velvet gown, suggesting the Crusades. The children were graced by magenta Scotch costumes, kilts and all. They were the cynosure of all eyes, and acted up to it, Spanish fashion, ogling the ten-foot distant stage and the audience with mother-of-pearl opera glasses. The orchestra was made up of what might be called shopkeeping middle class and a few frayed remnants of the vanishing upper

class or the poor-rich, wearing their passé finery very much out at elbow. Three performances a day brought out "class" groups, according to occupation, tradition and social preference. The servants, who often had as much loose cash as their masters, were held back by their jobs from swamping this particular performance.

We were first entertained by a radio broadcast of the news. A startling alarm bell rang and three musicians entered and played two pieces like automats, one of them being, "My Best Girl," to put the audience in tune with 1907, the period of Act I. Another bell rang three times and the curtain creaked up. The play was called *Asi Es La Vida* (Such Is Life). It not only showed the life of a Mexican family consecutively, in 1907, in 1917 and in 1937, but also it cleverly traced the political changes registering their repercussions on society. We could see only the hand of the prompter in his box in the front apron of the stage, his finger following the lines of the play. As in the Continental theater. Mme. Virginia Fabregas, proprietress of the theater, though an old-timer, still retains her popularity. She has a definite and affectionate following, although she showed no extraordinary histrionic brilliance. To all appearances, a good-natured hausfrau who is bursting out of her frocks in her enjoyment of good living, as solid as Gibraltar, and who does a yeoman's job. She must have been a captivating Juno in her prime.



Doming.

By Angel Zamarripa.

Garden of Etna

By Malcolm Lowry

ASKING anyone afflicted with Mexico to order his thoughts is much like asking him to order them about the sea, or the woman he loves. Yet I have often felt there must be some reason for the devotion among much that is inexplicable.

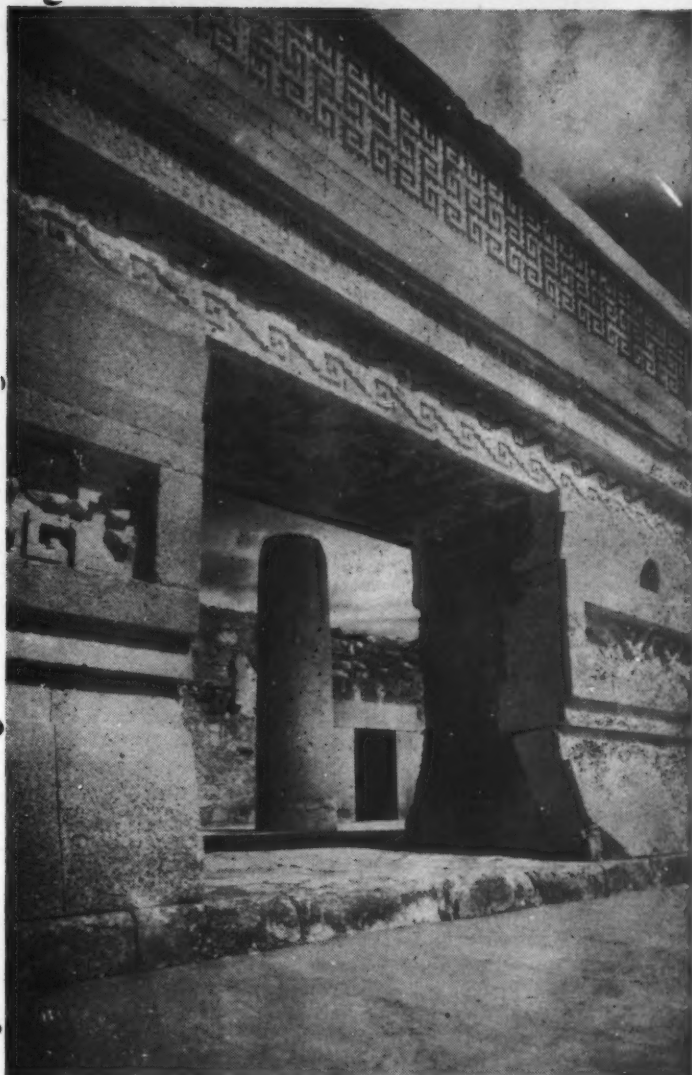
We may smile reading the travel advertisement: "Magic Mexico, where the past mingles with the present, and the days go by in a timeless golden haze."

And yet, there is a magic about Mexico, the days do go by in a timeless haze, its romance and mystery are not overstated. But what is the secret of the attraction, one might say the almost teleological psychic attraction, of Mexico? Why do so many people go there, and, having gone, long to return?

The person who falls in love with Mexico falls in love with a colorful and proud and present entity, it is true, but he is also involved, in the deepest sense, with a mystery. That does not sound new: man himself is a mystery, and perhaps this is part of the point. The aqueducts of Rome, or the baths of Caracalla, had a purpose, and those familiar with history can identify themselves with the people who built and used them. But some of the monuments of Mexico imply a total, a more than Egyptian enigma, leaving beyond the questions "To what end?" or "How?" the question "Whence?"

It is customary to blame the Spaniards for this state of affairs. For example in Mitla, in Oaxaca, in the marvelous Zapotecan place of sorrow (in itself constructed in such a fashion as not merely to baffle archaeologists but completely confound anybody who has tried to build anything himself), we find the remains of an extensive library. No one knows what kind of books it comprised, for here as elsewhere in Mexico the Spaniards in their religious zeal to destroy the power of the priests and their religion, destroyed all the records too; even though in this case the Zapotecs were a beauty-loving and extremely enlightened race, who never made human sacrifices.

But let us move some miles away to Monte Alban, with its temples and pyramids, where Mexican archaeologists exploring the tombs found exquisitely carved objects of jade. But where did the jade come from? No one can tell us about the jade, nor who first built Monte Alban. And there is not even a legend—even Atlantis has a legend—as to who built the porphyry palace of Mitla. The Zapotecs had occupied the region for five hundred years before the Spaniards. But the Spaniards never found out who occupied it before that because the Zapotecs them-



Ruins at Mitla.

Photo. By Natl. Rys. of Mexico.

selves did not know. All we know is that the Zapotecs were a people possessing a high degree of civilization and cultural genius. But before that there were another people, also of an advanced civilization, and also possessing a high degree of genius...

The sense of this past, of sorrow, of death: these are factors intrinsic in Mexico. Yet the Mexicans are the gayest of people, who turn every possible occasion, including the Day of the Dead, into a fiesta. The Mexicans laugh at death; that does not mean they don't take it seriously. It is perhaps only by the possession of a tragic sense of life such as theirs that joy and mirth find their place: it is an attitude that testifies to the dignity of man. Death, defeated by rebirth, is tragic and comic at once. On many planes this is true.

Some people undoubtedly feel drawn to Mexico as to the hidden life of man himself; they wonder if they might not even discover themselves there. Or is it that faith is the key, or the mysterious presence of faith? The churches of Mexico are always open, and we walk in. But though their beauty might often warrant it, they are not open just for tourists to admire.

Though we sense and welcome this presence, some of us may also feel that it includes within it something far older which was its origin, deeper and still alive.

Beneath these unique and melancholy ruins of Mitla, in Oaxaca, there are subterranean chambers, in one a cruciform tomb, over the door of which there is a panel with hieroglyphics, the meaning of which is not known. Here on a stone an Oaxaqueñan quite recently found a wreath of flowers, of a kind known as *zempoalochitl*, used by the Indians in their burial

ceremonies, and, as if appealing to the realms of the dead for some person's eternal rest, a wax candle, burning...

I first went to Mitla some fifteen years ago in the company of a great friend, a Zapotecan named Fernando Atonalzin. For his ancestors, as has been said, it was a place of mourning; clearly the site had never been meant to be cheerful. A gale blew a screen of dust across the silent empty zocalo. A melancholy broken road, hedged by crepitant cactus, led to the ruin where, in a more open space, the wind wailed through those ancient halls that if they resembled anything, resembled Greece, and had housed who knew what drama, what prophetic movements. Birds not only do not sing, but have never, it is said been seen in Mitla.

Afterwards we repaired to an excellent and beautiful, though almost invisible restaurant (for there is nothing outside the high wall to tell you of the garden within) where we conversed over his favorite mescal.

About twenty-four when I knew him, Fernando stood six foot three—thus contradicting ethnology, for the Zapotecs are supposed to be shorter than the Mixtecs—and in features he rather resembled an Italian. I have said that he was, and he always thought of himself as, Zapotecan, but he owned some Spanish blood.

For sleeping under the stars and eating tortillas and beans he had a literal preference; doubtless he would have been equally at home at the Hotel Crillon in Paris. He had attended Mexico University where he had been trained as a chemist; apart from this, and a visit to New Orleans, where a relative was in the diplomatic service, he had spent most of his life in Oaxaca. With somewhat of the careless, noble bearing of a king, Fernando would have met with scant opposition had he claimed descent from his regal namesake.

Our conversation took place at a time when Oaxaca was not easily reached by the tourist. No navigable roads led into it, and during the slow circuitous train journey from Mexico City, through the furnace of the cactus plains, it seemed less as if you were going to Oaxaca or indeed any other goal, than into the sphere of one of Eliot's poems.

I laughingly cited this ordeal as a possible reason why Monte Alban and Mitla seemed, compared with other Mexican attractions, lesser known to the outside world. Or was it that as an arena of more recent historical events Oaxaca itself had been too animated to be concerned with her past? Had not, in the City of Oaxaca, Guerrero died, and for that matter, Porfirio Díaz been born? And was not Benito Juárez a Oaxaqueñian, and besides, Zapotecan? And were not those people of his race two of the most formidable names in modern history? Fernando smiled...

His judgments were not mine. The very word formidable was not one he cared to use in that relation. Time nearly repeated itself; history likewise. To a Zapotecan modesty was an all-important quality, saved from its false counterpart by its very silence. Why boast about that which has been done before? You could try to do better; you could succeed; but best keep silent about it. Life itself should strive, so far as possible, to be impersonal.

Man he likened to the Valley of Etla. Perhaps I would understand this better if he said the Garden of Eden. Every man was, in a sense, his own Garden of Eden. To this extent others could be seen as spiritual modifications of oneself. This was evil, but not wholly an illusion.

What was not an illusion at all was that you found yourself either within this symbolic garden or, mysteriously—and here I had to accept the paradox that this did not mean that you were exiled from your own soul—you were made aware that you had been evicted from it. If not, one of the surest ways to become evicted was by boastfulness, though this had a deeper meaning than was contained in the mere word. Be impersonal as you may, the moment you attributed any formidable value to yourself for this, you went out.

Then, one of the most certain ways never to return was by excessive remorse, or sorrow for what you had lost. This to a Zapotecan was more of a sin than it was held to be by the Catholics of his upbringing; it was another form of boasting: the assumption of the uniqueness of your misery. In fact that was probably why the Zapotecs had set a special place aside here in Mitla for one's mourning: excessive mourning led to the same thing. Had I ever heard that Cárdenas or Juárez were boastful men? They too, I would probably find, had been modest in their claims, as with certain reservations, they were impersonally intent on doing good. Fernando had strayed from the point: but somehow he had objected to the word formidable—

As I listened to this I seemed to be looking into the impenetrable gaze of some Mexican eidolon that itself seemed looking into eternity. How much of this, I wondered, had come down to Fernando from the old Zapotecan religion? Or from yet older sources? And where had I heard anything like it before? In part like Catholic thought, Ecclesiastes, much like the Stoics, resembling esoteric Eastern knowledge, like nothing I had heard of in its partial recognition of solipsism, and at the same time in its unswerving belief in a living God—back, back, my ill-informed mind went, across the Atlantic, back in time to India, Greece, the Orient—whence?

But the job to which Fernando was frankly dedicated provided yet another strange link with the past. This was with the Banco Ejidal, whose historical function was (and is) based on an old Aztec system, a bank that differed from another bank in that instead of your going to it, it went to you—if you were a remote Oaxaqueñian village—largely on horseback in those old days, and across wildly dangerous mountainous terrain. Fernando had a genius for languages, and he needed it, for his part was that of the horseman, often combined with that of a doctor, and there are fourteen different languages in Oaxaca; he spoke them all, including Chinanteco, Popaloco, and Zoque, and the mournfully majestic old Spanish of the conquistadors, such as is still used in San Lorenzo Abasco. In addition he spoke Italian and French fluently and had mastered English, though in speech he had a haunting habit of putting prepositions ("I like to work them with") at the end of a phrase.

I had once had the privilege of being invited on one of his more hazardous journeys, in fact from Cuicuitlan to Nochistlan, via Parian, where at that time there was no road. On the way (this was 1937) we ran short of a horse and rather than wait longer for another, Fernando insisted I use his while he ran. A mere matter of twenty miles, mostly slightly uphill. Moreover every time I prepared to dismount he would urge his horse, who was enjoying the whole thing after a rest, to a canter once more, and when I would inquire if he were not getting tired, Fernando would laugh, and had the breath to do so uproariously. He liked, he said, to run his horse with.

This story, not for the first time, I was telling

Continued on page 64



Water Color.

By Roy Vincent MacNicol.

The Collective Ejido

By Clarence Senior

THE Laguna region, Mexico's most important cotton zone, since 1936 has been the scene of a new approach to that complex which is called "The Agrarian Problem." The problems of land tenure and rural social change existing in all countries were present in La Laguna in varying degrees. The Agrarian Revolution came to the region in October of that year. Its object was the fundamental reorganization of the economic and social system and the building of new institutions through which the land workers could exert more control over their own lives.

Expropriation, land redistribution, crop diversification, cooperative organization, increased education, more sanitation and better health services have partially helped to solve the people's most pressing problems.

The ejido, a group owning farm lands collectively, became the dominant rural institution. Most Laguna ejidos, because of the nature of the land and the farming operations conducted, are worked cooperatively. About thirty thousand families were given the ownership of land in around three hundred ejidos. Approximately three-fourths of the irrigated land in the region was distributed to the formerly landless farm workers.

A frontal attack upon the problems arising from rural feudalism launched at the time of the expropriation. The Agrarian Revolution, which had just reached its twenty-first year, for the first time attempted to come to grips with the problem of transferring land ownership in an area characterized by large-scale economic units. Previously the government had been content to nibble away at the edges of the huge estates which so long had characterized rural Mexico.

The Laguna region until 1936 displayed characteristics of both rural feudalism and large-scale capi-

talist enterprise. It is one of the few areas in Mexico where corporation farming had become important.

Social conditions varied from one property to another. The schools required by the 1917 Constitution had been erected and teachers hired on some. The Madero family had supplied hospitals on several of its properties, but on the vast majority there was a complete absence of medical care for the peasants. Company stores, saloons, and gambling houses characterized many haciendas. Many of the manors were surrounded by thick walls with gun slits in the corner towers. Many of the riding bosses who supervised work in the fields carried whips and wore revolvers.

In general, the Laguna region had its share of the practices prohibited by the 1917 Constitution and by the labor code based on it. The more important of these provisions were: payment in cash instead of company script or in kind; wages not to be paid inside any store or saloon; employers forbidden to maintain stores on their properties or to interfere with the creation of free markets; peonage for debt outlawed; and sons may not be made subject to debts contracted by their fathers.

Side by side with the haciendas were a few, scattered communally-owned properties. All but one were on the periphery of the region, of little value, with water lacking or scarce, and at some distance from the commercial centers. These small concessions to the laws of the country were the only indications between 1917 and 1936 that the Constitution of Mexico applied to the Laguna region.

The peasants had attempted from time to time to organize unions and demand the application of the Federal labor law. It was not until 1935, however, that they felt the possibility of support from the Pre-

sident of the Republic. Lázaro Cárdenas had been elected the previous year after a nation-wide tour in which he preached the necessity of labor and peasant organization.

The first strikes were met with reprisals which led to greater bitterness and increased strikes. A general strike so tied up the region that the peasants were persuaded to call it off only by the President's promise to apply the agrarian law. The expropriation decree of October 6, 1936, was the result. It represented a break with the agrarian policy of the past in that it strove to maintain at least part of the large-scale farming units. Cárdenas summed up previous experience as follows:

"Groups of peasants were in the past given worthless bits of land, and lacked farming implements, equipment, credit and organization; this was meagre fruit indeed after the great sacrifices made to attain it. The ejido so conceived would have ended not only in disappointment but also in giving large land owners one more excuse for cutting down to a still viler level wages that were already vile enough, alleging that farm hands had now an additional means of livelihood."

The expropriation decree was based on the agrarian code of 1934. Among other things, this code provided that no fewer than twenty persons must join in applying for land. If their petition was favorably acted upon by local, state and national authorities, land was to be granted to them at the rate of four hectares (9.9 acres) per person. Eligibility of the peasants was determined in several ways. The chief criteria were residence within seven kilometers of the property to be affected, and at least six months of work in the region.

The decree affected 114,814 hectares of land in the region and 127,272 hectares of the 1,314,224 hectares of land classified as nonirrigable but usable for pasture and other purposes.

Hacendados were left at least 150 hectares of land, the location of which they could choose from their total area. Theoretically, each peasant was given four hectares of irrigable land plus pasture and woodland. If an owner then had land left he was able to sell it in lots of not more than 150 hectares. A new Bank for Ejidal Credit (Banco Nacional de Crédito Ejidal) had been formed the previous year. It was charged with the provision of technical advice and direction as well as credit.

The Cárdenas program broke with previous tradition but it could not escape the effect of the techniques which had become habits among the personnel who were to carry out the redistribution of land in the region; neither could it escape the limitations of a legal code based on the idea that the ejido should be purely a supplement to the hacienda system. These handicaps led naturally to a series of moves which have profoundly influenced the development of the ejidal system.

A land tenure map of the Laguna region at present would show a "crazy quilt" pattern. Some ejidos have plots of land separated from each other by several intervening private properties. Some have the major portion of their area in first-class lands; others have almost their total area in practically worthless lands. Some ejidos were cut off from irrigation ditches, wells and roads. In computing the total area of irrigable land serious errors were made and land which had been irrigated only during seasons of exceptional river flow was classified as irrigable. In some cases the boundaries of ejidos overlapped each other. In other cases, ejidal boundaries encroached on private property and vice versa.

When to the lack of previous preparation is added reorganization of the region in forty-five days, the possibilities of errors in judgment by hasty surveying and map making are seen to be multitudinous. Not a single soil, land-use, or topographical map of the region was available to guide the surveyors.

Possibly the most serious move of all was the inclusion in the agrarian census of most of the migratory workers who were in the region at the time of the expropriations. This meant, first, that in the ejidos thousands of persons were included who were not full-time farmers and who had none of the stable habits of persons who for years had worked the land throughout the four seasons, and second that the ejidal system was burdened with a much larger number of persons per unit of workable land than was normal.

The new type ejido owes something to the Aztecs and to the experience of other countries as well as to an analysis of the errors made during the first period of the Mexican agrarian revolution. It is equalitarian in structure, but it also includes the idea of higher compensation for skilled workers and more efficient producers. The cooperative ejido, as worked out originally in La Laguna, has changed from time to time on the basis of experience, but it must be recorded as one of the important social inventions of recent years. It has since been adopted in other regions.

Most ejidos work with the Banco Ejidal through the formation of a local society of collective ejidal credit. This is not obligatory and some ejidos have advanced to the point where they have saved enough money to be free from reliance on outside credit for their crops. Those which do not work with the Banco Ejidal have the same structure but vary at obvious points from the following brief outline.

The members in general assemblies elect an administrative committee of three members and three alternates as the executive body of the ejido. From among the members one is chosen to be the executive officer in certain matters.

Supervising the work of the administrative committee and of the individual members in their appointed tasks is an elected vigilance committee. It is particularly charged with seeing that the land is used in the best possible manner, and that investments (in machinery, mules, goods for a cooperative store, etc.) are well made. Its president, acting jointly with the executive officer of the administrative committee, signs the legal papers of the society. If two "tickets" are presented at the election, and the minority obtains more than thirty per cent of the votes, it elects the entire vigilance committee. Twenty to thirty per cent entitles it to name two members and ten to twenty per cent, one. Members of both committees serve for three years.

General assemblies also elect a work-chief or foreman, and any assistants he needs. They also elect a warehouseman, a herdsman, a manager for a cooperative store, and other important officers. The key man is the work-chief. He meets each week with the administrative committee, the vigilance committee, and a representative of the Banco Ejidal to map out the work program. He makes a detailed distribution of work to each member, keeping track of what is assigned and what is accomplished. Each member carries a work card which at the end of the week shows exactly what he has done, and to what weekly compensation he is entitled. The work-chief also keeps a detailed daily record of the use of the society's machinery, animals, feed, fuels, and other resources. The

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Water Color.

By Alfred C. Ybarra.

In Champerico

By Dana Lamb

THE port of Champerico is a roadstead: it has no protected harbour. Boats wishing to take on or discharge cargo at this port must anchor off the end of a heavy pier built out into the ocean, well beyond the breaker line. Lighters ferry the cargo between the ships and the pier, where it is transferred to and from the lighters by travelling cranes.

A small freighter was anchored off the port when we arrived. We circled round the vessel, the "Salvador," one of the British-owned Pacific Steam Navigation Company's boats. Its crew waved to us, and we returned their gay greetings. Later on the presence of the "Salvador" turned out to be a piece of real luck for us.

We paddled over to the pier, more than a little anxious about our reception. With the exception of our Seaman's Protection Certificates, we had no papers for Guatemala or for any of the countries south of Mexico. We hoisted a "protest" flag, a white rag on the end of the harpoon shaft stuck in the mast seat. According to maritime law, a ship in need of supplies, or repairs, may by hoisting a "protest" flag, enter any port without the payment of port charges. However, when a ship does enter under "protest," the decision as to what shall be done with the vessel rests with the Port Captain. Though he cannot refuse a ship water, food, or emergency repairs, he can refuse to permit the crew to go ashore.

We pulled up beside a lighter unloading cargo and informed the superintendent of the pier that we wished to speak to the Port Captain. After an hour's wait, a delegation of officials arrived. The two dozen soldiers who were guarding the pier snapped to attention. The officials began shouting to us, but we were unable to understand them because of the roar of the ground swells that churned about the pilings. The Port Captain finally grew tired of shouting. A

crane swung over our heads which lowered him down to the lighter in a passenger chair. All passengers embarking or disembarking at Champerico must use the chair to gain the pier or the lighter. He stumbled his way across the lighter and glared at us. "What is it that you want?" he demanded.

"We wish to enter your port," I answered politely.

"You have papers?"

"Of course, Señor Capitán," I replied, handing him the papers we had used when travelling down the coast of Mexico. Actually, these papers weren't worth anything in Guatemala except as identification, still you never could tell. Many of the port officials who had been unable to read had nevertheless been highly impressed by the official seals and stamps on the documents. This fellow could read, however, and he read every word of every paper. When he had finished, without further speech he walked to his travelling chair, climbed in, and was hoisted up to the pier."

Ginger gave me a sickly grin. "Now we are stuck. That fellow's taken all our papers."

The boom swung out and the chair was lowered again, this time with two uniformed guards as passengers. They came over and one of them started to step into the canoe. "Wait a minute," I protested. "What's the idea?"

"You two," he said brusquely, "are to go up on the pier. I am detailed to guard your boat."

We climbed into the chair and were hoisted up on the pier. The guard untied the Vagabunda and started paddling toward one of the lighters. When we stepped out of the chair, two guards ranged themselves on each side of us, informing us that we were under arrest. The Captain and his friends had departed.

One of the guards tugged at our shore clothes bag, which Ginger held firmly clasped under one arm. "What have you there?" he growled. Ginger meekly explained. "I must see them," he insisted. To her great embarrassment he drew out every single item of her clothing and mine, and subjected each piece to the closest scrutiny. Luckily, we had left our cigarette lighters in the canoe, for they are contraband in Guatemala, where matches are a government monopoly. After considerable persuasion on our part, and stubborn resistance on theirs, we were finally allowed to seclude ourselves for a few minutes in a small room to one side of the pier, where we changed into our shore clothes.

We waited on that pier all day. No one except the guards and the foreman of the pier came near us. Pedro Jauriqui, the foreman, seemed to be the only friend we had in the whole of Guatemala; he divided his lunch with us, and found a Guatemalan magazine for us to read. About three o'clock I got "riled," and demanded to see the Port Captain. A guard, dispatched to his office, soon returned with the good news that the Captain was asleep. He pointed out that of course it was out of the question to disturb His Excellency's siesta, because of two forgotten gringos cooking in the Guatemalan sun.

About five o'clock things began to pick up a bit. An officer made two trips to the Salvador and back. When he returned from the second trip, he stopped by the lighter and took the canoe in tow. The poor guard, who had been assigned to watch it, had also been allowed to simmer in the hot sun all day; but he wore a broad grin as the canoe was pulled up alongside below the pier.

To our unspeakable delight the lieutenant in charge informed us that the captain of the Salvador had asked the Port Captain's permission, which had been granted, to take us aboard his ship for the night. We were as pleased as children as we paddled the Vagabunda towards the freighter, whose crew received us with open arms.

The officers and crew of the Salvador were a noteworthy exception to many crews aboard small boats. An air of amiability and friendliness from the Captain down pervaded the ship; it was apparent that they liked each other and their jobs. Smart, clean-cut young Britishers, they did their work efficiently, and without friction. The Salvador was a combined passenger and cargo boat, touching at all the Central American ports between Cristóbal, C. Z., and Champerico. She was a trim little craft with all her paint work clean and her bright work polished.

Everyone took a great interest in our trip and in the canoe, and suggested that the Vagabunda be hoisted aboard for a closer inspection. When they saw the condition of the little craft—for we had some tough sailing after leaving Sebastiano's—the whole gang immediately set to work repairing and painting her. Two coats of quick-drying paint that night, and one the following morning, did wonders for her weatherbeaten canvas.

Well-fed, rested, and with our morale miraculously restored, we paddled back to the pier the following morning. There we found that the Grace Line representative, Mr. F. C. B. Close, had also come to our rescue, and that we were to be allowed to go ashore and see the Port Captain. Since the Grace Line owns most of Champerico, Mr. Close's word carried weight with the Guatemalan officials. We had no idea as to what lay in store for us as we followed a uniformed guard, lugging a gun several sizes too big for him, to the Captain's office. The Captain greeted us cordially, and invited us into the living quarters ad-

jacent to his office. After presenting his wife, official formalities were dropped, and for the duration of our stay in Champerico we were treated with courtesy by the authorities.

The Captain explained the reason for our cool reception. It seems that most of the people who start out to see the world in small boats, and to live the life of Riley in the tropics, manage to run out of money and everything else by the time they hit the Central American ports. A few days before our arrival, a small ship had entered under "protest," and had demanded food, water, and even ice, which the crew had no money to pay for. There are also a number of tramps sailing along the coast, who attempt to beg supplies at every port they enter. Little wonder that the port authorities are slightly reluctant to welcome small boats. The Salvador captain's explanation that we had money to pay for anything we needed changed our status at once. When we were ready to leave, we were given a letter to the officials of San José, Guatemala.

San José is one of the larger West Coast tourist ports where the American tourist has the reputation of being a sucker. The moment we went into a restaurant, prices were boosted; coffee automatically became worth ten cents a cup, and rolls five cents each; in contrast to the regular price of four cups of coffee and all the bread you want for three cents gold (American money).

However, when one considers what the natives have to put up with from the tourists, the charges do not seem half enough. The British Consul's wife, Mrs. Summer-Hayes, told Ginger of a typical experience she had with a group of travelling Americans. She had gone to market with her Guatemalan maid. She placed the big market basket under a tree beside her mistress, while she went off to buy meat. Meanwhile a party of American tourists came along who were "doing" the market. They were not only rude, but unobservant as well, for Mrs. Summer-Hayes is tall, slender, and definitely English. The tourists stopped and looked at her. "She looks fairly clean, but you never can tell, perhaps it's only on the outside," one of them commented. "Yes," agreed another, "she may be dreadfully dirty underneath." All this time they were poking about among the contents of her market basket, with never a "by your leave"—no doubt acquiring material for a club paper on "Life in Guatemala." The Consul's wife was so dumbfounded that she lost her voice and just stood there. At that moment, the Grace Line factor came by, and guessing from Mrs. Summer-Hayes' outraged expression what was happening, broke through the ring of tourists, picked up the market basket, and asked after her health and that of the British Consul. That finished the snoopers; they melted away very quickly, but without a word of apology. Imagine the effect of such a manoeuvre on a Guatemala lady, who might quite as easily have been the victim of their rudeness as Mrs. Summer-Hayes. It would take more than the pronouncement of the head of the United States to make her feel that North Americans were "good neighbours"—or good for anything!

Another incident was related to us by an American, who owns a ranch some distance out of San José. Guatemala is his home and he has adapted himself to the country, dressing in native costume when among the natives. He comes into town once a week to visit the Summer-Hayes, the Grace Line factor, and other Europeans. He always rides into town wearing his vaquero dress, and changes later into European clothes. He came in one day

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With the Artists

By Hudson Strode

THE telegraph company of Mexico had obviously not been imbued with the spirit of punctuality urged by former church fathers in San Miguel. The "extrarapid" telegram I had sent to Stirling Dickinson yesterday from Mexico City had not yet been delivered when we sought him out. Through mutual friends, Dickinson and I had exchanged letters about Mexican roads, and he had advised me some weeks earlier not to try to reach San Miguel from Morelia by automobile. I had never met the man, but I was eager to see the new art school he and Felipe del Pomar had established.

Dickinson proved to be a brisk, lithe young man with blond coloring and a Princeton degree. His home was in Chicago. He looked as thoroughly and alertly American as the casually elegant Peruvian-born Felipe del Pomar looked the Latin American patrician.

"Obviously a fountain pen," Esperón said of Del Pomar.

"A fountain pen?"

"A Mexican expression for bluebloods—we use blue ink in our fountain pens here."

The two men were glad to show us about their layout. It was something to be proud of.

Though up to 1940 it was only the exceptional tourist who had heard of San Miguel de Allende—it is not even mentioned in Frances Toor's comprehensive *Motorist Guide to Mexico* (1938)—artists began to drift here after 1935. In 1938 Pomar and Dickinson joined forces and founded an art school. The expressed aim was to further the development of an indigenous American art and bring together artists and students from the various republics of the Americas. The founders gave the school an imposing name: *Escuela Universitaria de Bellas Artes*. Pomar furnished most of the money and Dickinson got the students—about half of them coming from Illinois in the first four seasons. Both of them taught classes in painting, and by 1942 nine new instructors had been added to the faculty—among them the distinguished Mexican artist Rufino Tamayo, who teaches in the summer term.

The Mexican Government had believed in Felipe del Pomar's vision and had made the new school a generous grant. The former Convent of Las Monjas was remodeled carefully in a manner to preserve the glories of its colonial architecture. Commodious studios, offices, a dining-hall, a kitchen, a shop, and living-quarters for the faculty were arranged. The students study modern art in a gentle atmosphere of Old World beauty. Besides courses in painting, those in sculpture, fresco, weaving, ceramics, architecture, and languages are offered. Two pleasant new hotels have been built in the town to accommodate the students, as well as take care of the sweep of tourist traffic that is sure to come when the projected highway to Querétaro is constructed. Some of the students live at the Ranch, which is one of the most attractive features of the school.

A few miles from the town, high in the hills and extending over a hundred fertile acres, the Ranch is



Drawing.

By Angel Zamarripa.

like a combination of country club, gentleman's estate, and dormitory. The gardens and orchards supply fresh vegetables and fruits the year round. There is a tennis court, and even a frontón for playing jai alai, doubtless inspired by the Havana-born Señora del Pomar, who is the niece of the Cuban diplomat Marques Sterling. At the bottom of a series of lawn terraces, at the very edge of an enchanting wooded ravine is a modern swimming pool. Students who do not live at the Ranch use it as a recreation club. The group that does live there are like both guests and hosts at a hacienda house party.

For his own dwelling Pomar has reconstructed a colonial house on the highest road directly above the town. His balconies face the setting sun and the domes and towers of the town below. The focal point of the gardens is a great majolica fountain, which reflects cascades of blossoms. Tiers of planting fan outward up the hill in increasingly wide arcs. Pomar's studio is apart from the main house and higher up in the garden; and in one of the rooms Tamayo painted while his own house was being constructed across the street.

The stone walls and partitions of the modern house the Tamayos were building were already erected. One could stand in what was to be the drawing-room and look out of the great long window that extended the length of it and see what would be seen through plate glass when the building was completed. From the site there was a steep drop to the rooftops below, which were so drenched in flame-colored bougainvillea that the property seemed to rise like a promontory above a turbulent sunset sea. And far down and away lay the pattern of the town's center, with the creamy domes of churches like mounds of winter butter. The house was to be spacious and to have an abundance of clear light so essential to a painter. It would cost just three thousand dollars to build, Tamayo said, including architect, stones, flooring, glass, plumbing for two bathrooms—everything. I made an

estimate in terms of United States construction—certainly not less than twelve thousand.

"And for the land," said Señora Tamayo, "we paid a hundred dollars."

I did not gasp, but asked about taxes.

"Two and a half pesos, every other month," Tamayo replied.

"Fifty cents bimonthly?" I repeated to make quite sure. "Three dollars a year for taxes?"

"Right," said Tamayo, nodding his handsome Indian head, and smiling with the corners of his mouth down.

"Just that," said Señora Tamayo, her eyes sparkling with humor and gratitude to Providence.

But how can you "uplift the downtrodden masses" on such taxes as these? I wanted to ask. (I knew that Tamayo was an avowed sympathizer with the Marxists.) How can you raise the living standards of the poor on such wages for construction? But I refrained from indelicate questions and said, "You are blessed indeed," and looked away from the view and back to husband and wife. I noted the texture of skin—the rich brownish tones of his, the rich cream of hers. I remarked the moody, smoldering quality of the man's honest eyes. I turned to the radiance of his lady's—such frank eyes, full of fun and incorruptible goodwill, always expectant of the best, quite assured of beautiful tomorrows, and exhilarated by the happy now. An excellent woman for this strange man stirred by creative fire, rapt in poetic moods, and moved by the suffering of his brother man.

Señora Tamayo was wearing a peasant costume with sheer muslin blouse and full-gathered skirt of red-and-yellow cotton embroidered in cotton thread. Besides being a charming outfit, it gave her a practical, capable look, as if she could prepare a substantial meal, keep accounts, and cultivate her own kitchen garden as well as play hostess to international friends. She was saying that they would continue to live half the year in New York, where Rufino taught and painted, and the other half-year here.

"Six months of the year in Paradise," I said, taking in the panorama, the atmosphere, and my conception of the completed house. "And apparently for a song," I added as I turned from the window at strange noises and stranger sights.

A procession of mouse-colored donkeys was coming in at the front door. Each bore on its back two large building stones, which it wore like kidney pads. As the burro boys unloaded them, Señora Tamayo gave each beast a caressing word and a pat. "Where it is impossible to get a truck to the mountain quarry," Tamayo said, "transportation by burro-back is convenient and cheap. All the stones for this house have been transported by burro. Primitive way to get materials for a modern house, isn't it?"

"Without the burros we could hardly run the school," Señora Tamayo said. "Today we're having a picnic lunch at a mountain shrine—the whole school up the trail on burros. Stirling Dickinson has been engaging animals for days from all the villages about. May we take you?"

I declined without regret. I had no notion of spending half my day with my legs stretched over a donkey. Nor did Esperón relish the sport. And Townsend and Wagus were going off to visit an Indian village some dozen miles away.

We stopped again at Pomar's studio to look at a picture Tamayo had been working on for weeks. It was an ancient woman with an indefinite, triangular brown face and vague, deep-sunken eyes. She sat before a kind of spinning wheel, staring blankly. Her dress was a strange shade of dark-blue, like something

from another world. I saw the form Tamayo had created, but I did not know what he was saying. I could not know what was in him that begat that form. I merely beheld the visible productive activity of his waking consciousness. And since I knew the beholder is supposed to see and hear only himself in a work of art, I confessed to some blankness in myself—for this work was only obliquely meaningful to me. As I stood there silently before the picture trying to divine its secret, I recalled Spengler's words: "Men of two different kinds are parted, each in his own spiritual loneliness, by an impassable gulf."

Tamayo was a rebel—I knew that well enough. And I knew he did not fall into the "Mexicanist tendency to indulge in the picturesque." He was looking, he had once said, for pictorial purity without loss of local color. He proclaimed that he was seeking universal principles, working for unity and purity of expression. His themes are neither popular nor national—and yet in some super-subtle way the mood or inner heart of the Mexican people shows forth. Perhaps, as an admirer claimed, this highly sensitive Indian expresses with his intuition and emotion the inexpressible qualities of his people. I understood that art is supposed to rise from folklore and gradually become sophisticated. I wondered if the phantasmagoria of Tamayo's art is perhaps a kind of equivalent for the longings of a people still on the naive level of culture.

I recalled a gouache of Tamayo's entitled "Harmony in White," where white horses are trotting sportively to music made by a melancholy dough-faced clown, who sits strumming a guitar with his brown fingers. Great sticks of wood lie about. And there are sticks and logs scattered through many of his other pictures, just as he often uses three mandolins or three guitars. I did not ask him what these symbols of scattered sticks and three musical instruments meant to him. I stood there fascinated, gazing at the misty old woman in unearthly blue. I cannot say I was at ease before this picture, but I was intrigued by its other dimensionality, and I could quickly recognize the artist's genius.

At half-past five that afternoon Del Pomar and Tamayo, very spruce in white-doeskin trousers and dark coats, arrived at our private car in the Ranch station wagon to take the Captain and me to Stirling Dickinson's cocktail party. When we stopped to get their wives, the ladies floated out of the Pomar gateway in billowy chiffon evening dresses, with flowers in their hair and jewels twinkling at their ears.

"Oh yes," Señora Tamayo said, laughing, noting the expression on my face. "San Miguel is quite, quite gay. After the dinner for you tonight, we go to a wedding dinner party at ten. So—'her fingers caught at the chiffon of the skirt, held it out, and dropped the filmy stuff as if she were scattering white petals in the dust—'this."

"My, my!" I said, handing her and Señora del Pomar into the station wagon. "A picnic luncheon on burroback, a cocktail party and two dinners. I had not dreamed social life in this idyllic spot could be so demanding."

She laughed a musical, bantering laugh. "When the season here is over and we are completely fagged, we return to New York to rest up."

Stirling Dickinson's place lay some two miles from the town on a winding, leaf-shadowed road rimmed with low rock walls. The rooftop lay just below the road, and the house followed the contours of a sloping ravine. Through a gate, you descended an oblique staircase to a terrace, where you entered a

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Patterns of an Old City

By Howard S. Phillips

BLACKBIRDS IN THE LAURELS

THE blackbirds were settling for the night in the plaza, fleeing in wild criss-cross swarms over the ancient laurel trees, filling the twilight with a tumult of screeching and the swish of beating wings, intruding for a brief interim upon the radios howling from the cantinas and the usual medley of more subdued noises that hung in the air.

"The birds," Priestley remarked, "take over with a proprietary air. These trees belong to them as much as they belong to these people. It's a kind of sanctuary."

"Yes," Miss Prestiss said. "It's part of the life here in Cuernavaca. It lends charm to the place. And it's the same in Taxco and in Yauatepec. It's something that belongs to the... the..." She started to say "atmosphere," but the trite word hardly expressed her thought and she paused.

"The life," Priestley continued for her. "The deep inner rhythm of existence, the sense of timeless and inalterable shape and cadence which pervades everything here—the air, the trees, the people, the streets that bounce and twist around the deep ravines, and the great silent mountains beyond..."

She liked his spontaneous, articulate way of saying things, the sharp, and precise voicings of a penetrating mind, an eloquence that was not an affectation but a natural outflow of words that projected his singular thoughts. He was a very strange person, she thought, unlike almost anyone she had ever known, and she wondered what made him seek her company—why he had taken note of her in the bus, merely because she occupied the adjacent seat, and commenced talking by making some such casual yet arresting remark as the one she heard him make now. I am a spinsterish school teacher of thirty six, she said to herself, who assuredly would not be attractive to a young man of his looks and intelligence. Is it just loneliness—the effect of these strange surroundings—the compulsion to talk to someone—anyone?

"I have felt that too," she said. "But you've put in into exact words. You have a way of uncovering what's underneath the things we see that gives them their true meaning." The next instant she felt self-conscious by the complimentary inference of her remark, for hitherto their conversation had followed an entirely impersonal course and was limited to generalities. It was a conversation which might be sustained through a casual wayside acquaintance, and that was pleasant so long as it remained impersonal.

"Thank you," he said. "But perhaps it's the other way around—the true meaning of things, so palpable, so readily discernible in the outward aspects of a place like this, might give an apparent depth to quite shallow reactions. Our blunted vision seems to acquire a new sharpness in a strange and provocative midst. One is not likely to speculate about sparrows at home, but we are intrigued by blackbirds in Cuernavaca. It is worth traveling far only to see them swarming over these trees."

Nearly all the tables in the long arched terrace were now occupied with groups of tourists, this being the evening's refreshment hour, and detecting among them various young and inappropriately accompanied

women, the thought that he could spend his time much more rewardingly again passed through her mind. What is he after? she asked herself. It was pleasant to sit in this terrace, taking occasional sips of the pungent rum punch through a straw; it was quite agreeable to hear him talk; and yet she sensed a minute unease in his company. There was a purpose, she felt, a hidden design, in his apparently casual and impersonal sociability, and it would all lead up to something disagreeable in the end.

When he motioned to the waiter to order a fresh round, she declined politely, and claiming that she had to write some letters thanked him for his kindness and excused herself. They shook hands in parting, and she passed inside the hotel patio, called for her key at the desk and went up to her room.

* * *

She had actually intended to write a letter to her mother when she made her excuses, but now, sitting at the little table near the window which faced the plaza, her mind went blank after the opening sentence. During the six weeks she had spent in Mexico she sent her several laconically worded picture-cards, and she knew that she should write at least one full-length letter before she returned. And yet she could think of nothing worth writing about.

"A while ago," she wrote on, "the little square below my window was full of blackbirds. But now they are all quietly roosting in the trees." That will sound silly to her, she thought as she read the line. Mother is not interested in things like that. I should write her about the classes at the Summer School and the progress I have made with my Spanish and what I have learned of Mexican history and observed of its social conditions. I should speak of the practical things, try to please her by justifying this trip I have made contrary to my own desires. Well, she thought, it's hardly worth the trouble. Mother has been always opposed to almost everything I have done, and nothing I may write to her now will diminish her resentment. It might only serve to increase it. That's how things are between me and mother. It is the constant unforgiving resentment, a bond of grudge, which actually keeps us together. Alone in the world as we are, it is to that extent that we need each other.

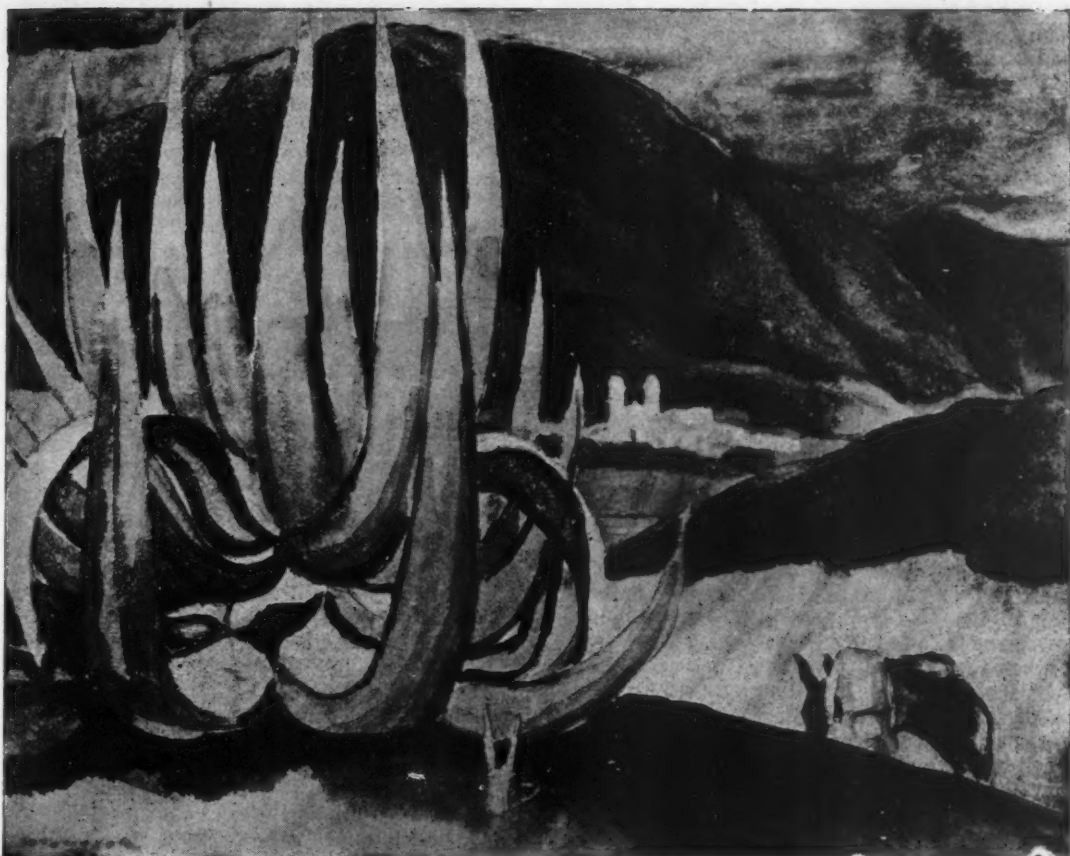
Miss Prentiss was seldom given to introspection. But now, sitting at the little table in the meager light of a one-bulb reading lamp, unable to proceed with her letter, as she thought about the incongruous relationship which existed between herself and her mother her mind gradually turned to her self.

Such mental deviation was most unusual with Miss Prentiss, for her personal existence was so deeply absorbed in a busy routine as to become almost imperceptible to her, and, moreover, she instinctively avoided such probing for it invariably led to a sense of want and frustration. She preferred to forget her own quite unsatisfactory life immersed in the daily grind and to observe that of others at a safe distance in the story-books she read. And living this shorn and withdrawn life, unconsciously harboring the constant burden of envy, she was guardedly hostile toward anyone whose life was comparatively normal. In her daily task as a teacher at a junior college she was a stern disciplinarian.

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Lithograph
By Julio
Castellanos.



Water Color.

By Antonio Sotomayor.

Down the Hatch

By Herbert Cerwin

THERE ARE at least several hundred varieties of cacti and agaves growing in Mexico. Both are indigenous and usually are at their best in the most arid regions. They also do well under cultivation and once thousands of acres of hacienda land were given over to maguey for the production of pulque.

As a plant, the cactus has been a good friend of Mexico, each variety serving some use. It has provided the natives with such fruits as the nopal, the pitahaya and the prickly tuna pear. Many edible dishes are prepared from the roots. Cactus and agave fibers produce twine, matting and wicker for chairs, as well as thread for sewing. The thorny pads produce an excellent needle. Before the Conquest, the Aztecs used the leaves to manufacture a paper equal in quality to the Egyptian papyrus.

These plants have provided for Mexico as friends, but have also been enemies. From them are made tequila, mescal and pulque; for some, drinks of the gods, but for most, drinks of the devil. The first two can turn a peaceful Indian into a diabolical maniac and a home-loving mestizo into a jealous killer.

Of the three, tequila is the most popular and the most widely sold. It comes principally from the quiet little town of Tequila, a few miles out of Guadalajara in the state of Jalisco; it is shipped from there in great quantities to all Mexico. Mescal is a regional drink, made and drunk in Oaxaca and Chiapas. Pulque is the lowest in alcoholic content and is consumed like beer, though it cannot be bottled and will not keep long.

Tequila is close to being straight alcohol and has a peculiar flavor and odor. Some of it is white, other types such as *añejo* and *almendrado* are amber in color. It is manufactured from the lower leaves and upper roots of the small maguey plant, which are roasted, crushed and then set to ferment. Afterward it is distilled. It does not cost much to produce and therefore can be sold cheaply. Its effects last a long time. Many quarrels and knifings are the result of too much tequila.

In the past tequila, mescal and pulque were the tools of the hacendados who used them to enslave the peons by keeping them constantly in debt. Today the peons have their freedom and their land, but their

enslavement to tequila, mescal and pulque continues. Practically all they make goes into getting drunk; for a great number of them, every Saturday and Sunday becomes a paranda, a riotous week end of drinking. For many Indians, market day usually winds up in drunkenness.

It is a pitiful sight to see some of them straggling along the highways on their way back to their villages after market day. Sometimes they are hysterically drunk, shouting and weeping; more often they have passed out on their feet and are carried or helped along by their women or their more sober friends.

Unfortunately, very little work has been done in study of the sociological and psychological factors which might be responsible for the heavy drinking among the Indians and the lower mestizo class. It is well known, of course, that Aztecs, Mayas, Tarascos and other tribes used alcoholic beverages in their religious rites long before the Conquest. "They danced and leapt before their idols," wrote Bartholomé de las Casas, "and gave them to drink of the best wine that they had drenching their lips and faces with it... they drank copiously and this they did for no other reason than religious zeal..."

There is probably no doubt that there was heavy drinking in those early days, though severe punishments were meted out by the Aztecs for drunkenness. Later, when they turned to the Christian religion, the use of alcohol as part of the ritual continued and was seldom discouraged by the priests. The Spaniards, however, as we have already pointed out, found alcohol helpful and employed it as they did religion, to foster the low economic way of life they had established in Mexico.

The peons not only developed a great craving for alcohol during this period, but found it a temporary release from their miserable existence. We know what possession of land means to an Indian; yet the desire for alcohol became so powerful that even those who owned land were forced to part with it in payment for alcohol debts. As late as 1930, in southern Mexico, alcohol was still being used to contract labor for the coffee plantations.

Dr. Ruth Bunzel of Columbia University, who has done extensive research on the alcohol problem among Indians, has uncovered some interesting facts about their drinking habits and behavior. Her studies, however, were limited to the Quichés of Chichicastenango in Guatemala and the Chamulas in the Mexican state of Chiapas.

The Quichés, who in some ways are similar to other tribes in Mexico, were found by Bunzel to drink not as a social act, but because drunkenness made them forget the conflicts and frustrations that are a part of their life. Some of them are known to go on sprees that may last a week and that may cost them all they have earned during the year. These sprees often end in sexual transgressions and in quarrels, quite opposite to their otherwise dignified behavior. When they sober up they are conscience-stricken and develop a sense of guilt over their drunken acts.

The Chamulas, on the other hand, Bunzel found, drink apparently only as a social act and generally during religious ceremonies. An invitation to drink is usually preceded by the remark, "Come, let us warm ourselves." Men, women and children drink, and some of the women consume tremendous quantities and seem to hold it better than the men. Alcohol has become an important part of every social contact and as such is accepted by all. While they do not get as hysterically inebriated as the Quichés, they do get drunk enough to pass out. I remember one Christmas day when we were there, the major-domo of Chamula

invited us into the church. He was quite drunk and as he showed us around the church he talked in a loud voice, while other people were trying to concentrate on their devotions.

Bunzel reports in her studies that the Chamulas do not suffer the morning after from hangovers, have no sense of guilt over the previous day's behavior and undergo no noticeable depressions.

The Chamulas may be an exception, though I believe that the comparisons just made between these two tribes may be found to be true among other Indians in Mexico. Further studies of this type might be interesting, and might throw some light on how best to tackle the alcohol problem, which for Mexico is a pressing one. Apart from the harm this excessive drinking may do to the individual, it is also the cause of a great deal of absenteeism in all kinds of work. It not only makes the Mexicans more irresponsible but adds to their poverty. Money they might use to better their home life is left on the cantina bar. This happens with the Indians, as it does with the lower-class mestizos.

So far, the government has taken no steps to reduce the number of cantinas or to discourage drinking. Actually politicians learned the trick from the hacendados, and at big political outdoor gatherings, one of the methods used to get a good turnout is offering free tequila and pulque. Invariably these political rallies end with the Indians getting drunk; sometimes, to the embarrassment of the politician, they cheer the wrong candidate.

An Indian seldom drinks even a soft drink slowly; he usually gulps it down. It is the same with tequila. Furthermore, he does not take one or two drinks and let it go at that. He keeps on drinking until he feels it, until he knows he is getting drunk. And tequila is treacherous; one is not aware of its effect instantly. It creeps up and then hits like a hammer.

Actually there is not as much drinking among the middle class of Mexicans as there is in the United States. I have seen American tourists get drunker, more riotous, than any Indian on market day. And I don't think they can blame that on either the altitude or the tequila which they may be trying out for the first time. Tequila may be an enemy to some Mexicans, but it can also be quite pleasurable stuff. When one becomes accustomed to the flavor, it can be as good as Scotch or brandy. Somehow, too, it is very Mexican in character. It is the only drink I have found that goes well with Mexican food, as if it were a very part of it, as it is, of course. Scotch whisky with Mexican food would be as out of place as champagne with baked beans.

Tequila is usually drunk straight with salt and lemon. Once we asked a great tequila drinker why it was so important to take a dash of salt and lemon with it.

"One takes salt to create thirst and to sharpen the taste," he said. "One bites into a lemon to kill the taste and to stop the thirst."

"But do you not like the taste of tequila?" I asked.

"Of course."

"Then why the salt and lemon?"

"Don't you Americans do the same with a cocktail?" he said. "You take a good bourbon or gin and you make a cocktail to hide the taste, or perhaps to make it more palatable. It is the same with tequila. We make our own type of cocktail. Yet after all, what we are interested in is not the 'how' but the results."

Tequila brings on the results, as does mescal, though the latter has a different flavor and taste. In

Oaxaca, where the best mescal is found, the ritual of drinking is similar, but instead of ordinary salt, a salt made from the maguëy worm is used. In the Tehuantepec isthmus and in some sections of Chiapas, a drink known as comiteco is also drunk.

In the northern sections of Mexico, aguardiente, manufactured from grapes, takes the place of tequila. This aguardiente is not to be confused with that of Chiapas and Guatemala, which is usually made from sugar cane. With the grape aguardiente, there is usually no salt or lemon ceremony; it is just drunk, and it can be as potent as tequila or mescal. In the hills above Chihuahua, the Tarahumare Indians make a palatable beer from fermented corn.

Pulque is popular among the lower classes and the Indians of the central plateau. It is a light beverage and for thousands it is a food. Laboratory analysis of pulque reveals that the organisms which produce the fermentation contribute vitamin B and protein to the diet of the Indians, while the vitamin C content is also considerable.

Most Indians in the pulque region drink from one to two liters a day, and others are known to consume over ten quarts daily. The alcoholic content is from 3 to 5 per cent and the average pulque intake is enough to supply more than the minimum daily requirement of vitamin C. About 25 per cent of the caloric intake of the Otomí Indians also comes from pulque.

Though both tequila and pulque are produced from the maguëy agave, pulque is not distilled and therefore does not lose any of the food value. The maguëy plant used for pulque is several times the size of the one used for tequila.

The pulque maguëy takes from seven to ten years after planting to become productive. As it approaches the flowering period and matures, the plant sends up a center stalk on which there are greenish-yellow blossoms. It is at this moment that the maguëy is ready and the tlachiqueros, or juice gatherers, know just when it can be tapped.

The center stalk is cut and the tlachiqueros place one end of a large gourd against the cut surface where the juice has collected. They then suck at the other end, drawing the liquid up to the gourd. This aguamiel liquid is transferred to a pigskin and taken to the fermenting rooms of the hacienda. The fermentation is hastened by adding a small quantity of "mother pulque" and within twenty-four hours the new batch is ready to drink. It is good only when fresh.

The juice from the maguëy plant is collected in the mornings and afternoons and it is not unusual for a plant to give ten to twelve quarts daily for a period of three to four months, after which it becomes exhausted and dies. The plant however, reproduces itself by sending out hijos, little shoots that in time grow large enough to be tapped.

The operations of sucking the juice out by the mouth, transferring it to the pigskin and then to the fermentation vats, are obviously not done under sanitary conditions and the fermentation is not strong enough to kill bacteria. As a result, by the time pulque reaches the metropolitan area it invariably has more than a trace of harmful bacteria. Those who are accustomed to drinking it seem to develop some immunity, while others get dysentery.

In Mexico City and in other communities in the region where it is drunk, pulque is not sold in the regular cantinas but in bars known as pulquerías. These are disappearing fast, though there are still hundreds of them in existence, principally in the poorer districts of Mexico City and in practically every

small town in the central plateau. One can usually identify pulquerías by the wonderful names over their doorways such as: THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE FUTURE, PURITY IS VIRTUE, THE DREAM OF GOD, MY LOVE. Inside, the walls of the pulquerías are often decorated with elaborate paintings, the forerunners of the Mexican frescos and murals.

The most famous of the pulquería painters were members of a family named Cienfuegos. During the past fifty years father and son painted the walls of virtually every pulquería in Mexico City. Their pay was in pulque and in food. The father died at the turn of the century and his son only recently, at the age of eightythree, and then not from pulque. He was killed by an automobile as he was getting off a bus.

No one took his place because the pulquerías are going out of fashion. The large haciendas which once made fortunes from pulque production have been divided and now there are only a small number supplying it. The people are turning more to beer and such soft drinks as Coca-Cola and soda pop. Because pulque is so perishable, it cannot be shipped long distances and therefore cannot compete against bottled drinks. It is probably just as well, since Mexico has learned to produce beer of excellent quality which is much more sanitary than pulque.

It is curious that, while the Indians took to pulque and tequila, they never became addicted to the stimulant from another plant, as indigenous to Mexico as the cactus: marihuana. It was well known in preconquest times, and yet its use was not general; very few Indians smoke it now. Those who go in for Juanita, as they call it, are often mestizos of the lower classes who are known as marihuanos.

The sale of marihuana is prohibited in Mexico but it can be obtained easily. It is a fast-growing weed and when dried and rolled into a cigarette it resembles tobacco, though it is smoked differently. A marihuana addict must take "los tres golpes" to get the proper effect. He lights his marihuana cigarette, inhales deeply and holds the smoke as long as he can. He does this three times. Then he carefully extinguishes the cigarette and saves it for another occasion. The effect of it is supposed to come gradually and to give the smoker a feeling of well being, of bravery and endurance.

Lately there have been some arguments in Mexico's medical circles as to whether or not marihuana is actually a drug. Some believe that the effects of it are more psychological than physiological; others are violently opposed to these views. But most Mexicans, whether or not they are doctors, have seen too much evidence of the effects of marihuana to believe that they are slight or purely imaginary.

The percentage of people addicted to it in Mexico is small. There is no question, however, that it was widely used by the Aztec warriors as a stimulant and to give them added bravery in fighting the Spaniards. It reappeared in general use again during the revolution when federal troops as well as the rebels found it useful just as benzedrine was useful to soldiers in this last war. In the song La Cucaracha, there is a reference to the men being unable to go on without "marihuana que fumar."

The Aztecs and the Yaquis in northern Mexico employed on occasions another drug much more powerful than marihuana, though less well known. It comes from a low-growing spineless cactus plant which looks like a spinning top and is called peyote. Bernal Díaz and other historians referred to peyote but did not go into detail as to how it was used by the Indians.

Its chemical properties are not fully known. Some believe that peyote acts as an aphrodisiac and was so employed by aging Aztec noblemen. The Yaquis are supposed to have sent their prisoners into the desert with no food but a bag of peyote. When they ate it, they had delusions and eventually went mad. Others who in recent years have tried the drug claim it gives sound to color and that blue has the pleasantest sound of all.

But these drugs do not constitute a major problem, for Mexico's real problem is too much tequila. Prohibiting the sale of it will not work, but what may get results are education and the establishment of recreation centers. They may not prevent Indians and mestizos from getting drunk, but they may provide them with other things to do than going on a spree.

Recently I was in the town of Suchiate, on the border of Guatemala. We were transporting some cases of furniture across the river, and after it was done we paid off the men who had helped us. They headed directly for the nearest cantina. In less than half an hour their money was gone and they were drunk.

"Now what will they do?" I asked my Mexican companion, Fernandez.

"Sleep it off, find more work, buy more tequila," he said philosophically.

"That's a hell of a way to live," I said.

"What else are they going to do with their money?" he said. "There's nothing else in this town they can spend it on."

I started to answer him, but thought better of it. There was the problem clearly defined before me. Yes, what could they do in this town, which, like so many isolated Mexican towns, had nothing to offer except tequila? I looked around me and down the dirt street with its wooden sidewalk. There was the church, the badly kept up little plaza and a poolroom. But that was all, not even a motion-picture theater for the evenings.

For a moment I was certain I had the answer. Give them education, create in them a desire to improve their standard of life. Let them have better houses, beds instead of petates to sleep on, more nourishing food to eat, radios on which they could hear music from Mexico City, baseball scores and bullfight results. Give them recreation centers and athletic fields for outdoor sports. Give them a chance at social adjustments that will come with the reform that is going on in Mexico. Yes, give them something more to live for than tequila. Would that help? Perhaps, but I am not sure.

Fernandez took me by the arm. "Come," he said. "Let us go and have a tequila."



Water Color.

By Roy Vincent MacNicol.

How to Speak English to Foreigners

By Opal Gooden

IN the moment I arrived to the United States I am no man, I am a leetle child. Because I cannot to speak like a man and other mans know me as stupid. I no understand what they say me. These is my trouble."

This was the bewildered and unhappy reaction of a successful engineer, a person of consequence at home, who had landed in the United States ten days earlier with machinery specifications in one pocket and letters of credit in the other. He had discovered that nothing shatters a person's confidence quicker than a bombardment of unfamiliar sounds in a foreign tongue.

Since the close of the war, the United States has been playing host to more foreign visitors than ever before in our history. They are not the poor immigrants of the past seeking streets of gold, or career diplomats who center their activities around Washington. Nor do they belong to the "international set," which knows Park Avenue and Palm Beach as well as the Riviera. The postwar foreign visitors, especially those from this hemisphere, are trade-association representatives, manufactures and engineers, importers and finance specialists, professors and lawyers, air pilots and ground-crew mechanics, labor leaders and agricultural experts, government specialists of all varieties. And their wives.

With dollars so scarce, few foreigners come to the United States for the ride these days. They come to buy things, to learn things, to negotiate for future exchange of goods or ideas. Their interest takes them to cities, towns, and rural areas from one end of the country to the other. Because we insist on it, they are willing to play the game in English, but it takes time for them to reconcile the English they learned from books with the language we use every day.

Few of us face the necessity of doing business in a foreign language, but more and more we may find ourselves involved in a business matter, a civic conference, or a dinner conversation with a foreign visitor. Everything may hinge on whether or not the usual noises we make with our vocal cords mean the same things to him—or to his wife—as they do to us. Business executives, government officials, and educators who have had long experience in dealing successfully with English-speaking foreigners observe a few do's and don'ts that lessen the visitor's troubles and often prevent embarrassing complications.

The first rule is to speak distinctly. Very few of us do. We mumble and grunt and swallow our words so much it is small wonder we sometimes end up by "eating" them. Mentally trade places with your visitor and you will realize why a foreigner needs a little time to attune his ear. The vocabulary he studied didn't prepare him for "whereyustayin" and "lookit thizuhway." Our free and easy habits of slurring syllables or running words together baffle his ear. It takes a little extra precision on our part for him to distinguish between suit, soup, and soap; between use, choose, and juice; or between ice and eyes, thing and sing. If, as Shakespeare admonished, we "speak the speech... trippingly on the tongue" and do not "mouth it," we help the visitor reduce his margin for error.

As extra insurance, write down such things as dates, times, places, and directions for future appointments. It will be appreciated.

A South American army officer, who had studied English seriously in preparation for a year's aviation training in this country, explained graphically what had been happening to him since he passed through New Orleans three weeks earlier. He drew what looked like a large question mark, but he put the dot in the center. "Theeze eez my ear. Theeze," pointing to the dot, "eez how much English goes inside my ear when first I arrived. Everything else I do not to understand. Next week"—he made the dot larger and larger—"eez more large and next and next. Soon perhaps my ears will leeson and understand all. You I understand almost all because you speak very clear and not so fast."

For many of us it is also a good idea to speak a little slower than we do normally. Not so slowly that it sounds childish, but enough to give the listener time to rearrange what has been said into a more familiar pattern. After all, he is translating, at least in part, as he listens.

The second rule is to look at the person when you talk. Again few of us do, although we are very critical of people who fail to "look you in the face." Watch his eyes, and you will know how much you are understood. Through our constant use of the telephone we are prone to forget how much facial expression helps to catch everything a person says the first time. This is especially true for someone listening to a foreign language and one reason why foreign visitors have so much trouble understanding telephone conversations.

It is also helpful to use your hands when speaking, if you can do it well. This doesn't mean aimless gestures, nervous mannerisms, or putting on an act. But such words as this, that, these, those, here, and there are actually vocal substitutes for finger pointing. Anyone who has tried to learn another language knows that these frequently used words are often hard to fix correctly in the mind. The appropriate gesture can pin them down.

Speak simply; repeat principal ideas at least once in slightly different words; avoid colloquialisms and idiomatic phrases. Basic English, with a vocabulary of less than 900 words, may seem colorless and a little stiff to us, but it is practical. This streamlined version of our complicated language is the English many Latin Americans study today and partly explains why they often speak better than they understand. Almost all of them read better than they speak. Even with the limited vocabulary of basic English, experts have found it is usually possible to give the listener a second chance by repeating an idea without using the same words.

Many of us tend to raise our voices in addressing a foreigner, thereby adding heat but no light to the conversation. More noise only increases strain and fatigue. As in most things, easy does it.

Remember that anyone who takes on English from a background of Spanish, Portuguese, or French has nothing in his language experience equivalent to our words do an get. He works hard to understand that "What do you do?" means "What is your work or profession?" You may struggle to "get a taxi to get there on time to get a seat." He would "take a taxi in order to arrive in time to secure a seat." You would "get the idea," he would "understand."

Go easy on those colloquialisms and pet phrases that are second nature to us. For a while, at least, remember that a "hot potato" is a "difficult problem" and let it go at that. A Chilean textile manufacturer was puzzled by a brief conversation with a U. S. business acquaintance he met on the street. They had been introduced before when the Chilean had called at the company offices to place an order for

some scarce replacement parts. The North American's friendly sidewalk talk, taken piece by piece, seemed completely contradictory to the would-be customer. Why, he asked, did the man say he was glad he "ran into him" on the street; why did the man tell him to "call up" the office to "find out" if they had "run down" the parts?

The world-wide acceptance of English as a language of business, science, and international affairs is a great advantage to us. However, it is making it necessary for us here at home to brush up on our English. Ours is a rich language, flexible and varied, with international origins of Latin, Greek, and Anglo-Saxon. Besides British English and American English, it seems likely that an international English is in the making that will be very useful when the occasion demands English with a foreign accent.



Photo.

By Natl. Rys. of Mexico.



CHOLULA. Oil.

By Margarita C. de Weihmann.

Margarita C. de Weihmann

By Guillermo Rivas

DESPITE the current fashion of non-objective, surrealist or "denatured" art, art continues being an interpretation of nature, and nature is so complex and many-sided that its interpretation cannot be confined to any one group or association of groups. Indeed, even those whose art pretends to surpass nature or surmount reality, are actually striving to reveal its hidden or mysterious substance.

Margarita C. de Weihmann can be included among such artists whose creative impulse springs from a direct and intimate bond with nature. Her sensitivity to nature manifests itself with equal force in her landscapes, her portraits or still life. By this I do not mean to say that she employs her talent, her technical resources and her mediums with the sole aim of recreating or copying nature. What she endeavours to do is to translate into paint her impressions of nature.

Whether she paints out doors or in her studio, arranges a still life or utilizes a living model, her canvases are a product of an immediate contact with nature. In each she depicts a fragment of the world, depicts it faithfully, without deliberate distortion of perspective or object, without reshaping nature's own

composition into incongruous juxtapositions; and yet she creates a world of her own.

To this extent her art might be classed as naturalistic. But it is not a naturalism of direct transcription. There is a subtle measure of individually and a degree of disciplined independence in all her work. We find in it an invariable plastic coherence, a sensitivity in the outlines and at times an exciting swirl of forms. Her brush has the facile assurance of a painter whose reactions are certain and swift, and her palette has a sonorous quality faithfully attuned to the depiction of Mexican scenes.

Margarita C. de Weihmann has lived and worked in Mexico for many years. Her art is closely identified with Mexico's flora and fauna, and yet her personal expression has never been influenced by the contemporary native trends. Throughout all these years she has preserved the fresh perspective of an avid discoverer, and has painted in her own way. Her art, eschewing innovations or vagaries, is an authentic personal expression. She has never allowed it to become imprisoned or enclosed by the vogues of the moment, or the dictation of the momentarily powerful. She seems to have never lost sight of the fact that painting suffers under any dictation, that it is the freedom of an individual artist to express himself or herself in his or her own way which is all-important.



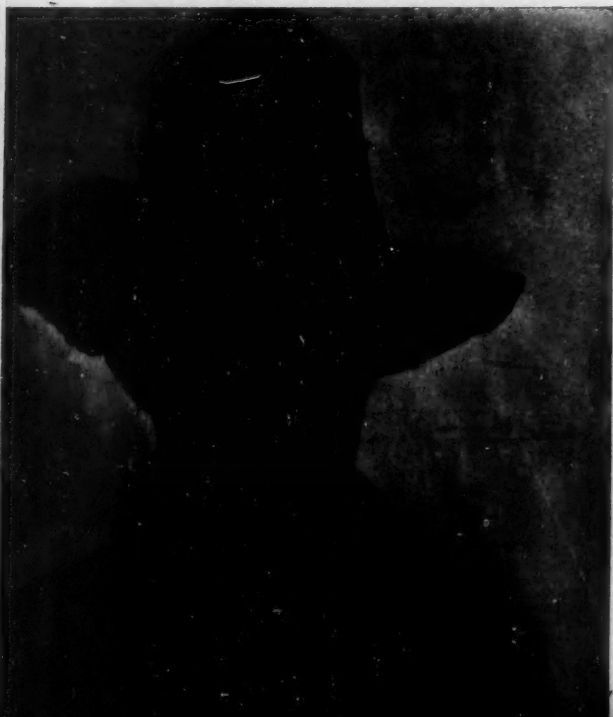
SIERRA DE HUACHINANGO. Oil.

By Margarita C. de Wehmann.



RIO YAUTEPEC. Oil.

By Margarita C. de Wehmann.



RANCHERO. Oil.

By Margarita C. de Wehmann.



CUAUTLA. Oil.

By Margarita C. de Weihmann.



NECAXA VALLEY. Oil.

By Margarita C. de Weihmann.

RIO AMACUZAC. Oil.

By Margarita C. de Weihmann.





ACAXOCHITLAN. Oil.

By Margarita C. de Weihmann.



MAN WITH MACHETE Oil.

By Margarita C. de Weihmann.



PEASANT IN GUERRERO. Oil.

By Margarita C. de Weihmann.

Un Poco de Todo

HOW PERON WARS ON THE PRESS

SINCE the beginning of this year the Perón Government has closed down more than sixty-five daily and weekly publications. Fifty were daily newspapers of a total of about 350 in Argentina. The mechanism for carrying out the drive on the press is a joint Congressional Committee headed by José Emilio Visca.

All this has been done through two simple devices—by shutting off newsprint or by invoking a decree that obliged all newspapers, beginning Jan. 1, to carry at the top of each page, "Año del Libertador General San Martín."

The process of the newsprint squeeze would appear absurdly complicated if it were not for a couple of valuable extra dividends from the Government's point of view, one being that it can claim it did not actually order the papers closed.

The really remarkable part of all that is that since last March the Government through its Sub-Secretariat of Information has been distributing the newsprint. Some papers critical or lukewarm toward the regime were merely reduced to fewer than half their former number of pages. With Señor Visca cutting off supplies at the warehouses, many papers have now been forced to close entirely.

Sometimes a system so simple required variations. Thus, when the anti-Perón "Intransigente" in Salta was found to have adequate newsprint stocks on hand, the newsprint was impounded by Señor Visca and his committee. Then "Intransigente" received an allotment from the Sub-Secretariat of Information, and Señor Visca impounded that.

"Los Principios," an influential, conservative Catholic daily in Córdoba, was first closed because Señor Visca found the paint on the walls of its plant less fresh than it should be and some windows with broken panes. After a few days "Los Principios" reopened with the sanction of Provincial authorities; but now it has been strangled by the newsprint squeeze.

Most of the closing, however, have been ordered because the papers failed to carry the San Martín line. This is where nationalism comes in.

Argentina, along with several other South American countries, is this year marking the centenary of the liberator's death. The observance here has taken on a fervor that tends to make General San Martín seem almost a demigod belonging to Argentina alone, and his name has become a rallying cry for chauvinism.

The upswing in nationalism is sought for several reasons. It helps keep down factionalism, important with the Presidential election coming early in 1952. It spurs greater efforts at a time when Argentina must produce more as imports are cut to a minimum. It brings people closer together in the face of difficulties such as the vexing shortages and criticism on any score from abroad.

Another side of nationalism is Señor Visca's careful nurturing of the campaign against the United States. Ever since Perón came to the Presidency, the "Yanquis" have been accused of whatever "foreign intervention" this regime wished to charge.

Thus if the United States criticizes Senor Visca's doings, there will be an automatic rejection of the criticism by many people here, especially the Perónist Descamisados, simply because it comes from the

United States, with the corollary that those same people will give at least moderate support to the Visca committee's activities.

THE CARIBBEAN CONFLICT

The good neighbor policy in one sector of the Americas—in the Caribbean—is on trial, and judgment should be rendered soon. This will be done by the Council of the Organization of American States, which invoked the Rio de Janeiro Treaty of Mutual Assistance. It had been asked to do so first by Haiti, whose Government accused leaders of the neighboring Dominican Republic of taking part in a conspiracy to overthrow the Haitian Government. President Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic, countered with charges that Haiti was plotting with Cuba and Guatemala to intervene in Dominican affairs. Señor Trujillo had previously ordered his completely subservient Congress to give him authority to declare war against any Caribbean state harboring enemies of the Dominican Republic. The State Department and all "good neighbors" were highly critical of this warlike gesture, which the President wisely saw fit to withdraw.

Meanwhile, in conformity with the Rio treaty, a five-nation fact-finding committee went to the Caribbean to investigate. Its members are now back in Washington drawing up their report for the Council of the OAS. The stage, therefore, is set for action. No one has a right to prejudge the issues or take sides at this stage. However, all who are interested in Inter-American peace and good-will have a right to ask that the Council act with plain-spoken courage. It should not shirk the responsibility for publishing all its findings. This is not an occasion where the whitewashing of an issue could serve any useful purpose. The Caribbean situation is unhealthy and even dangerous. A breath of sharp, clear air would help to set matters straight.

FUTURE WEALTH FROM THE SEA

The world's oceans may some day provide civilization with vast new supplies of food and medicine, according to Professor Werner Bergmann of Yale. In his opinion, the solution of the urgent problem of removing salts and minerals from sea water can turn great coastal and near coastal stretches of desert "into productive lands." He also predicts that chemical study of hitherto neglected forms of marine life will reveal many interesting compounds which may be of as much medicinal importance as hormones.

The removal of salts and minerals from sea water is needed to obtain new supplies of fresh water for industrial and farm use. Such a process might not primarily utilize the salts.

"Water shortage," Professor Bergmann points out, "has already become acute on the West Coast, and the use of ocean water is seriously being explored. The desalting of the water has already been accomplished on a small scale, but not yet in an economically large-scale operation. The ideal solution would be to derive both the mineral and the water from the oceans."

Continued on page 39

Literary Appraisals

MAGAZINES FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIES. By Laura K. Martin. 196 pp. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company.

EVERYONE longs for a couple of peaceful, undisturbed days, or a quiet weekend, in which to completely relax and catch up on one's current magazine reading. It's a worthy desire and one insuring both profit and entertainment. One naturally wants to be broadminded and include all magazines in this excursion in neglected reading. One might even be suddenly inspired to set a mental date and to enthusiastically dash off a note asking his dealer to deliver all the month's magazines.

The results should be startling. If this conscientious, if over-zealous reader has a strong heart, 20-20 vision, ample credit, large storage facilities and forty hours a week for reading, he will be able to catch up on one month's supply of magazines just under six vacationless years.

No one knows the exact number of magazines published in America in any given month. New ones come and other go almost daily. Counting the weeklies, and using official government figures, a month's production is something over 6,000 copies of different magazines. Obviously our impetuous reader's bill will be in the neighborhood of 1,500 dollars, and his floors subjected to a strain of something over six tons.

There is no moral to this story. For better or worse, the American public is exposed to that number of magazines each and every month.

For many years, the alert American Library Association has recognized that the problem is one of selection. Their committees screen the output and determine the worthwhile publications that can be read in a reasonable, profitable time.

Laura K. Martin, a member and former chairman of the Magazine Evaluation Committee of the American Association of School Librarians, has just published her own findings in "Magazines for School Libraries." Miss Martin reports in her book that out of the six thousand and some odd there is special merit in 318, and from these she especially recommends 112. This select list of the one hundred and twelve best includes **MEXICAN LIFE**.

The book is a library tool, but many serious readers will enjoy seeing it. They will be particularly interested in the sections on comics and censorship. If in consulting it in their library they will ask their librarian about "selection and classification" they will be well rewarded. Their librarian will be only too glad to show them the many copies of professional guides received monthly, including the many indexes of The H. W. Wilson Company, which reads and indexes over 1,400 periodicals every month, lists monthly, by subjects, author and title, every book published in the English language, and reports on all worthwhile pamphlets and 16mm film.

A visit to a library can't fail to impress the visitor with the efficiency with which librarians accept the challenge of the millions of words offered, automatically discard the unimportant, and permanently record and index the worthwhile.

J. C. E.

THE SPANISH STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE IN THE CONQUEST OF AMERICA. By Lewis Hanke. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press 1949. 217 pp

LEWIS HANKE is widely known in the United States today as a voluntary and permanent "ambassador" of Latin America, her culture and cultural leaders. In his perpetual dynamism we see him directing, the Hispanic Foundation of the Library of Congress—that great listening post of hemisphere spiritual life, standing safe and sound while other government agencies appear, blossom, and die. At the same time we see Hanke exhibiting and publishing books and pamphlets, suggesting and encouraging projects, accompanying and directing students and scholars, traveling again and again to Mexico, Cuba, or South America. Simple in bearing, generous, and accommodating, Hanke is unusually demanding and especially strict with his own work. Altogether, these qualities add up to a curious psychological combination: a vigorous personality with some of the more pleasant characteristics of a politician or businessman, a few drops of missionary blood, and all the basic requirements for a scholar.

* * *

Since 1930, Hanke has been living what he calls the "Lascasian period" of his life. The study of Las Casas took him from Harvard to Spain for two years, to Paris, London, and South America, gave him the opportunity to get to know and discuss the whole panorama of ideas and facts about the Spanish conquest and colonization of America in the sixteenth century. He has previously published a great deal on this subject, editing basic documents in Mexico (1943), interpreting ideas and institutions in frequent contributions to specialized journals in the United States, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, and Mexico, since 1936.

The U. S. edition of Hanke's new book, "The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America," will be enlarged for publication in Buenos Aires this same year under the title "La Lucha por la Justicia en América." The book in English is a synthesis of studies carried out in the countries visited. Like the work of many distinguished specialists today, his studies show the need for giving historical research an international character, since limiting the study to local or national sources leads to incomplete or faulty presentation. The historian's task thus becomes a luxury item. But it is not limited to learned aristocrats when, as in Hanke's case, the individual's interest and ability is backed up by universities, libraries, and private foundations.

Hanke as a historian represents three basic qualities that should be noted here, if only briefly. The first is the trend to the study of ideas or culture, as a reaction against the traditional emphasis on political and military history. Hanke ventures into this field without falling into the excessively technical manner of professional historians of law or philosophy. It is a field which has vast and as yet largely unexplored possibilities in America, though taking advantage of them does not mean that we should scorn the history of facts and institutions.

Secondly, in his gathering and use of documentary sources, Hanke represents the tendency to careful

integration of manuscript materials and printed sources, giving preference to original manuscript data but paying a librarian's careful attention to everything that has been published on the subject. His attitude, then, is far from that of the historical researcher who, valuing only unknown documents, never really manages to be a historian, and equally far from that of some authors of manuals and popular works who in their haste use nothing but already published material, without any basis in true scholarship.

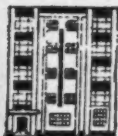
Finally, in his analysis Hanke has overcome any and all prejudice of party, religion, nationality, or ideology. He makes his way freely through a sticky period in which attackers or defenders of Spain—of the sixteenth or the twentieth century—are apt to be found hiding behind every parapet. The "Black Legend" disseminated by Las Casas and other critics of sixteenth century Spanish colonization had its repercussions in the European countries that were Spain's political or religious rivals. It was adopted by the champions of the doctrine of the "noble savage," in the eighteenth century; had its influence on the wars for American independence; appeared again in the Romantic movement, spilling out in our own time through the conflicting channels of liberalism and socialism. Spain, in turn, put up a vigorous defense all through the seventeenth century. But it decayed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth, to revive toward the end of the last century and be expressed most recently by determined champions in Spanish America itself, particularly among the conservative or aristocratic groups. Steering clear of

this dispute between "Indianists" and "Hispanists," Hanke pursues a basically scientific aim in his history of the struggle for justice in America: in Von Ranke's phrase, it is to tell what really happened.

With the discovery of America and at the request of the Catholic Kings, Pope Alexander VI in his bull of May 3, 1493, drawing a line between the spheres of Spain and Portugal, granted them in perpetuity the islands and lands discovered and not belonging to other Christian kings. What was the religious or political scope of this decision? If it granted political dominion, according to a group of lawyers and theologians, hence came Spain's just title to the conquest of America. Once they were notified of the existence of the document written in the Pope's hand, there was nothing for the Indian princes to do but submit. For the purpose of carrying out his notification, the "Requerimiento" was drawn up. Hanke has previously studied in detail that manifesto, ordered to be read before the beginning of any hostilities, and he examines it again in this book.

The political or imperialistic interpretation of the bull was sometimes accompanied by the theory that the original inhabitants of America were not the equals, as human beings, of the Spaniards. This thesis was dialectically defended by the theologian

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FROM OLDEN TIMES...

PIZA 1902

"Canal d'Aire" PIZA 1902

Sepúlveda. During the first half-century of the conquest, the Spanish Crown on its part carried out a series of curious social experiments to see whether the Indians could live as the Spaniards did. Hanke takes these up in the second part of his book. There were the investigations by the Hieronymites in Santo Domingo and other similar efforts like the plans to establish agricultural colonies in Venezuela, the attempt to use only peace means of conversion, and the radical reforms proclaimed in the New Laws of 1542.

In some of these experiments, the influence of the purely religious and ethical interpretation of Alexander VI's bull is apparent. That interpretation arose after the attack by Father Antonio de Montesinos on Spain's right to colonize America, in Santo Domingo in 1512. Its most famous spokesmen were Las Casas and Vitoria. Francisco de Vitoria, from his classroom at the University of Salamanca, denied the world-wide temporal power of the Pope although he recognized the right of Spaniards and others to travel to America. Las Casas respected the authority of the Pope to grant the Kings of Spain the power to carry out their spiritual obligations in the New World, but at the same time he defended the rights of the Indians and their chiefs.

Hanke studies these polemics in the third part of his book. He brings it to a close with another aspect of the same debate, directly related to the administration of the colonies. In the long run, reality imposed the imperialistic interpretation of the bull and the Spanish state assumed a dominant position in American life, although it managed to base the philosophy of its social legislation on the postulates of the ethical or religious interpretation. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, Viceroy Francisco de Toledo tried to base Spain's rights on the Inca government's supposed usurpation and oppression.

Never before has there been the scholarly interest which now exists in the problem of Spain's conquests in the New World and of the juridical status

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of the Indians in the sixteenth century. The extraordinary richness of this subject has yielded recent studies by the Spaniards, J. Manzano (1942), M. Giménez Fernández (1944), and V. D. Carro (1944), as well as outstanding books and pamphlets published since 1935 by the Mexican, Silvio Zacatecas. And U. S. contributions to this subject, represented by Hanke's work, must not be overlooked.

B. J.

BAD COMPANY: The Bandits, Stage Robbers, Outlaws and Stick-Up Men of California's Famous Gold Rush Days. By Joseph Henry Jackson. Illustrated. 325 pp. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co.

FEW of the characters in this excellent volume will be strangers to those who have read even desultorily of California's early and tumultuous years, but law-abiding folk never weary of the story of those who lived outside the law. Mr. Jackson's exhaustive research into the lives and times of assorted banditti has resulted in a worthy addition to Californiana.

He tells of Rattlesnake Dick Barter, first man to hold up a California stage; of Tom Ball, "the most intelligent, accomplished and kind-hearted American gentleman who ever took to the road"; of Dick Fellows, whose luck with horses was worse than bad; of the brutal Tiburcio Vasquez, and of mild little Charles E. Boles, who dubbed himself Black Bart and lone-handed held up twenty-eight stages.

All of them—and Joaquin Murieta! In his treatment of the famous Joaquin, Mr. Jackson—who is book editor of The San Francisco Chronicle—has sinned in the eyes of every loyal Californian for Joaquin Murieta is to the Golden State what Billy the Kid is to New Mexico or Jesse James to Missouri. He is Joaquin the dashing, the terrible, the "Robin Hood of Eldorado," and Mr. Jackson has demolished that legend.

That's fact, but all the rest is legend. The beautiful bride, ravished and slain by brutal Americanos;

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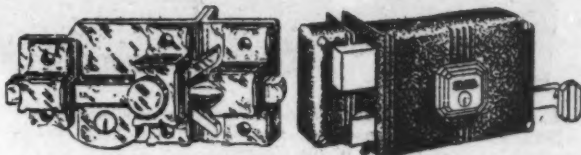
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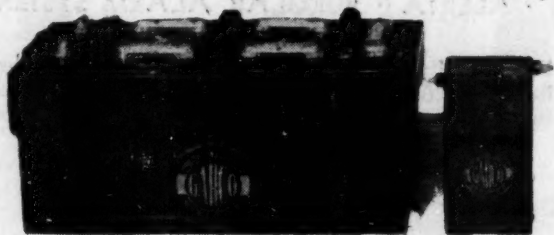
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the oath of vengeance, the secret caves, the millions in hidden treasure; all were unknown until the appearance of "The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta," written by one John Rollin Ridge in 1854. The pamphlet, says Mr. Jackson, "was nine-tenths pure invention (but) it created both the man Murieta and the legend."

Other pamphleteers and sob sisters and reportorial Munchausens seized upon the Ridge booklet and rewrote it and adapted it and added new and more lurid details. Frederick R. Bechdolt spliced in a few new strands of fantasy and the result appeared in The Saturday Evening Post. This wholly synthetic Joaquin has appeared in a book, in a play and in two motion pictures, but he was still the Ridge "pure invention."

Mr. Jackson has proved his case and the Murietaistas, if such there be, will find his arguments unassailable. But the fact remains that he has demolished a story that is gospel to Californians. In the Golden State men have been hanged in effigy for less.

There were, he points out, five Joaquins—Valenzuela, Carrillo, Murieta, Ocomorena and Botelleras. All were bandits and one of them was killed by Harry Love's posse on July 25, 1853. Contemporary newspaper articles denied that it was Murieta, but it is history that for years the dead man's head was exhibited as that of Murieta.

H. B.

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Current Attractions

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THROUGHOUT a period of years, opera as a public attraction, almost ceased to exist in this city, not, as some are inclined to believe, because it is an obsolescent art, but because of the multiple problems, economic as well as artistic, entailed in its production. These problems have been apparently overcome by the Opera Nacional company, whose sustained endeavours during the past seven years have been responsible for the local revival and popularization of this art.

The eighth consecutive annual season recently completed by this company at the Bellas Artes was in many respects the most brilliant and eventful of its career. Due to public demand, its initially stipulated program of nine plays was extended to thirteen. The season was further enlarged by various special presentations at popular admission prices, for the benefit of a public that cannot afford the "funciones de gala."

This season brought to us a number of foreign celebrities, and it also extended an ample opportunity to outstanding local singers, introducing as well several new and hitherto overlooked singers of positive talent.

The directors of the Opera Nacional can feel proud of the results it achieved during this season,

By Vane C. Dalton

for never before has it met with such enthusiastic public response. It was, to be sure, a well merited response. The season stands out for the high excellence of presentation and its wide and varied range. We were given the opportunity to hear German opera, performed by singers who know how to interpret it, and the select and elegant works by French composers, as well as the classical Italian plays which are so readily accessible to general taste.

"Norma" by Bellini initiated the season, with Maria Meneghini Callas in the leading role. It was followed by two almost unknown here operas, "Falstaff" and "Fedora," and an authentic local premiere of Verdi's "Simon Bocanegra." The repertoire was completed with "Aida," "Tosca," "Cavalleria Rusticana," "Pagliacci," "Il Traviatore," "Carmen," "La Boheme" and "Madame Butterfly."

Maria Meneghini Callas was the season's outstanding find. She is a soprano of absolute purity, of fine dramatic talent and an unusually attractive personality. She was especially brilliant in "Norma," "Aida" and "Il Traviatore." Giuletta Simionato's local prestige was greatly enhanced by her splendid performance in "Norma," "Aida," "Il Traviatore," "Falstaff," "Cavalleria Rusticana," "Carmen" and "Fedora."

Kurt Baum and Mario Filipeschi were the leading tenors. Baum, who has performed here on repeated



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occasions and is greatly admired for the ease and clarity of his voice, appeared in "Norma," "Aida," "Tosca" and "Il Truvador." Filipeschi also quite favorably impressed our public, performing in "Tosca," "Simon Bocanegra," "Carmen," and "Fedora," and scoring a veritable triumph in "La Boheme" and "Madame Butterfly." As to the leading baritones, Leonard Warren gave us a renewed opportunity to enjoy his superb voice performing in "Simon Bocanegra" "Falstaff"; while Robert Weede, of the New York Metropolitan Opera Company, appeared with great success in "Aida," "Tosca" and "Pagliacci." In the latter play, responding to a clamorous insistence of the audience he repeated the Prologue. Nicola Moscona revealed himself as a basso of magnificent force, despite the limited opportunity he had in "Norma," "Aida" and "Il Truvador."

Of the local singers, Alicia Noti pleased the audience in the role of Neda in "Pagliacci" and achieved her finest performance as Alice Ford in "Falstaff." Celia Garcia, carrying out the quite responsible part of Amelia Grimaldi in "Simon Bocanegra," and performing along the side of Warren and Filipeschi, admirably coped with her assignment. Eugenia Rocabrana appeared with marked success in such important roles as Nenette in "Falstaff," Olgain "Fedora" and Musette in "La Boheme." Concha de los Santos, as in former years, was entrusted with a variety of roles, and achieving her most notable performance as Suzuki in "Madame Butterfly," shared with Stella Roman the generous applause.

Of the local male performers, Roberto Silva, as Jacobo Fiesco in "Simon Bocanegra," seemed, despite his recent illness, in better condition than ever; while Gilberto Garcia, Carlos Sagarminaga and Ignacio Ruffino were as highly competent as always in secondary parts.

Two exceptionally fine new talents were presented during the season—the soprano Maria Luisa Salinas and the baritone Hugo Avendaño Espinosa. Both are quite young, have pleasing personalities and should with time reach prominence. Srta. Salinas sang with

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conspicuous success in the role of Micaela in "Carmen," and Avendaño Espinosa distinguished himself as Amonasro in "Aida." Their subsequent performance in "Rigoletto" further added to their success. The audience was also greatly enthused with the fine singing of Rosa Rodriguez in "Aida."

Puccini's most popular operas, "La Boheme" and "Madame Butterfly" were probably the most successful performances of the season, in both of which the audience was fascinated by the singing of Stella Roman and Mario Filipeschi.

The eighth season of the Opera Nacional, realized with the generous support of the government, private patrons and an enthusiastic public, extended through ten weeks and comprised a total of twenty-five performances attended by more than fifty thousand spectators. In all respects, it has been a record-breaking season.

Un Poco de Todo . . .

Continued from page 31

Studies have been carried out to learn how to collect and derive nutritive value from plankton, small sea organisms found in abundance. Bergman claims no originality for the idea: "I remember having once read that in the future mankind might have to eat 'plankton-burgers.' It is quite conceivable that small, overpopulated island countries will in the future add plankton products to their diet."

There are 300 million cubic miles of water in all the oceans. If we could dry out one such cubic mile of water we would get a mountain of salt containing 117 million tons. Bergmann also lists these elements as constituents of the same cubic mile of water: 6 million tons of magnesia, 4 million tons of potash, 300,000 tons of bromine, 2,200 tons of iodine, 200,000 tons of borate, 900 tons of iron, 450 tons of copper, 70 tons of uranium, 15 tons of silver and "a nice chunk of gold."

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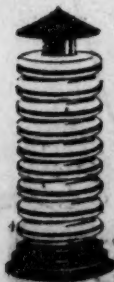


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Art and Personal Notes

LA Galeria de Arte Moderno (Calle de Milan No. 18) exhibited during the foregoing month sixteen large size paintings in oil—imaginatively composed realistic landscapes which combine elements of surrealism—by the young and gifted Mexican artist Ricardo Martinez.

Avoluminous exhibition of works by Carlos Mérida, our leading abstractionist, is being offered currently by the Clardecor Gallery (Paseo de la Reforma No. 226). In addition to oil and tempera paintings, the show includes various projects for mural and facade decoration in stone and tile.

JOSE Reyes Meza is presenting at this time a very interesting group of his newest canvases at the Galeria Arte Moderno (Plaza Santos Degollado No. 16-C).

PRINTS and paintings in oil comprise the exposition of works by Nicolas Moreno at the INBA Galleries (Calle de Puebla No. 154). Jointly with this exhibit, a collection of works by other distinguished local painters is being presented at these galleries.

FEATURING competition in printing, drawing, etching, sculpture, jewelry, weaving, ceramics and leather work, the Mexico City College Art Club's second annual exhibition will open on August 14 at the Hotel Reforma. The show will continue until August 21.

Cash prizes will be awarded the winners in the various groups. An extra popular prize will also be awarded the work that receives the largest number of votes from visitors to the exhibit.

Artists Carlos Mérida, Margarita Nelken and Miguel Covarrubias, and art critic Justino Fernandez, are to judge the show.

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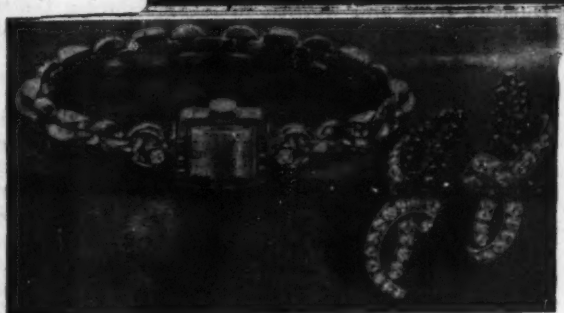
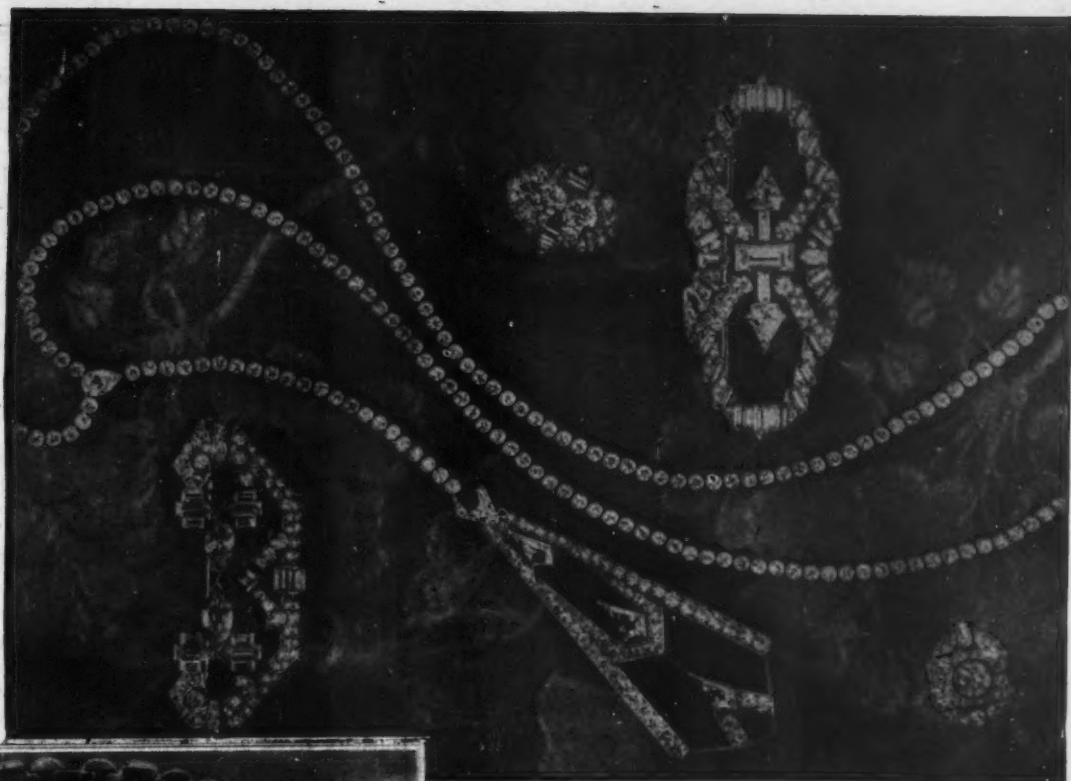
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FERNANDO GARCIDUEÑAS is being presented to the public at the Galeria Romano (Jose Maria Marroqui No. 5) in an initial exhibition of portraits and landscapes in oil and water color.

At the conclusion of this exhibit this gallery will present a group exhibit of paintings chosen from works by outstanding local women artists. The group is comprised as follows: Angelina Vertiz de Berthez, Pilar Calvo, Carmen Jimenez Labora, Ana Cecilia Treviño, Cristina Romero, Angela Saavedra, Maria Rosa Alvarez, Consuelo Cosio, Emilia Besnier, Irma Diaz, Polly Howerton, Alice Nayolor, Vera Wise and Helen Belger.

EL CIRCULO DE BELLAS ARTES (Avenida Juarez No. 58) is to show in the course of next month a comprehensive collection of landscapes and still life in oil by Margarita C. de Weihmann. The artist's impression of the Parícutin volcano which is reproduced on the cover of this magazine is included in this show.

THIRTY-THREE lithographs by Caroline Durieux formed the unusually fine exhibition presented last month at the Mexican-American Institute of Cultural Relations (Avenida Yucatan No. 63) Mrs. Durieux lived and worked in Mexico during the ten years between 1926, and 1936 and in recent years has been teaching art at the University of Louisiana.

E LMA PRATT, Director of the International School of Art, New York, visited Mexico in the course of last month accompanied by a group of painters. While here the excursionists spent their time in sight-seeing and painting under the guidance of Carlos Mérida. Elma Pratt has visited Mexico on various former occasions, has traveled widely over the country and painted the originals for the portfolio of ten silkscreened color reproductions, titled "Mexico in Color."

DRAWINGS and paintings by Luis Conesa may be seen during this month at the Galeria de Artistas Contemporaneos (Avenida Argentina No. 21).

ATENEO ESPAÑOL (Avenida Morelos 219) is showing a group of paintings in oil by Ramon Gaya, a Spanish artist who is residing in Mexico. Gaya is especially impressive in his studies of room interiors and still life compositions.

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Patterns of an Old City . . .

Continued from page 19

rian. Able and efficient, she exacted the same qualities from her pupils, sparing of merited kindness and unsparing of punishment. And though she was totally friendless and was passively disliked by the pupils and the faculty members, her rigid efficiency, her inordinate devotion to her task and an almost inhuman unbending aloofness compelled respect.

As to herself, she had indeed a hearty disrespect for everyone around her. Her hidden disdain was not bred by a feeling of her own superiority, but it served to avenge in her a sense of personal failure and unfulfillment. She disliked people on the whole because she profoundly disliked her own self. That, of course, is another way of saying that she was one of those extremely unhappy beings who grow so completely adjusted to a life of unhappiness as to lose a conscious urge for mitigation.

Her journey to Mexico had not been made in pursuit of pleasure or recreation. She was compelled by circumstances to make this trip. Unwittingly, she brought about the suicide of one of her students, and to escape the condemnation that descended, came to Mexico to live out the summer. The tragedy had affected her deeply, though the emotional state it produced was that of fear and disgust rather than that of remorse of self-indictment. The girl, she assured herself, had been a neurotic fool to have done a thing like that just because she failed to pass the exams. And it was only a perverse and malevolent impulse which made her infer in the parting letter she left to her parents that her teacher was responsible for her fatal step. She had been a difficult student, much brighter than the average, but of an unpliant pride, and Miss Prentiss particularly disliked such students whose intelligence challenged her own.

So it was on her mother's insistence that she decided to leave town. She would have preferred to remain and boldly face the situation, but somehow, in her constant disagreement with her mother, in the end she always followed her wish.

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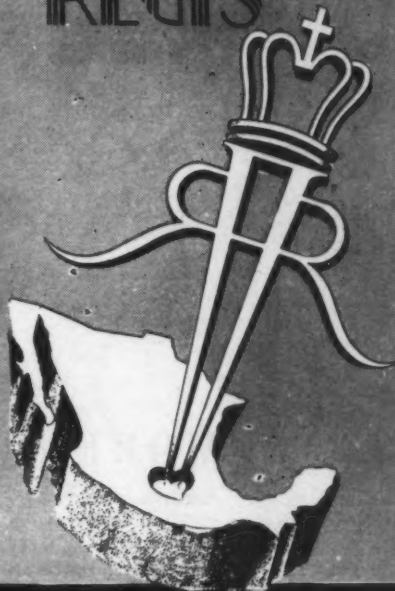
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And now, as she sat in the strange hotel room facing the partly written sheet of paper, her mind, waywardly drifting along the backward path of her own existence, was guided by a single primary comprehension: her life had shaped itself in its peculiar way because she never grew up to the normal stage of independence. At thirty-six she was still her mother's little girl. Ever since her father died, when she was a child of twelve, her mother's inflexible will completely controlled her existence. She acknowledged this truth to herself now, as if it were something she had perceived for the first time in her life, though she had always known it. Life, she thought, had given me one crucial test, and when I failed in that I failed in everything.

She had forgotten this failure, as one forgets a permanent bereavement or a bodily mutilation, but now it clearly emerged in her mind. She was eighteen then and very much in love. Joe Bledsoe was working as a teller in a local bank, and though the salary he earned was modest, he was about as eligible as any young man in town. He wanted to marry her; but for some reason her mother disliked him intensely. They were both too young, she insisted, and it was a mistake for a girl to jump at the first opportunity. She still had plenty of time ahead of her, and she would certainly find someone better. The conflict bitterly dragged on for months. Her mother did not stop at anything to gain her purpose. She employed guile, persuasion and threats, and eventually even resorted to sordid chicane to break them apart. Miss Prentiss was convinced that she could never find anyone better than Joe, and had he insisted upon it she would have eloped with him without a moment's vacillation. But he was probably too proud or too considerate for this, or may have lacked sufficient moral courage, for in the end, when her mother's machinations seriously endangered his job at the bank, unable to find another way out of his dilemma, he left town. She never heard from him, though indirectly she learned that he had gone to California and was working as a hired hand on a fruit-farm.



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It is hardly unusual for a girl not to marry the first man she loves; for in most cases someone else comes along presently to take his place. But in her case no one else came along. Having lost Joe, having lost the crucial struggle against her mother's overbearing will, she surrendered to it ever after. As if permanently stunned by the blow, as if the emotion of love could occur in her but once, she remained to tally indifferent to the young men who were attracted by her, and by the time she was twenty-five a dullness settled in her eyes, her face became bony and angular and assumed a set tight-lipped expression. By then she no longer attracted anyone. By then love was merely an amusing theme exploited in fiction and the movies. It was a realm that had no bearing whatever upon her existence. Her emotions became congealed within a routine of hard work and stern efficiency.

* * *

It was past nine o'clock when she left her room and the unfinished letter resting on the table, and went downstairs to the dining room in the patio. Most of the guests had finished their supper and with the place being almost deserted she felt secure in her privacy. She hoped that Mr. Priestley would not chance to find her there. She intended to leave Cuernavaca for Mexico City on the following day, and she preferred not to meet him again. But why do I go on thinking about him? she asked herself. What difference does it make if I meet him or not?

And as she kept wondering why she could not dismiss him from her mind, dimly she sensed that despite his complete strangeness, despite the fact that she knew nothing about him, she knew and understood him quite well, and sensing this she also sensed that in some inexplicable way they had a great deal in common.


Later, as she lay wakeful in bed, queer thoughts, like disconnected visions in a dream, incoherently ranged through her mind. Beyond a revolving and inconclusive motion of unwinding episodes, her domineering mother stood somewhere like an ubiquitous shadow in the background. She beheld her unpleasant experience at school, her involuntary flight to Mexico, the arresting sights she had seen along her journey—the torero pitched and gored by a bull, the flower-adorned canoes drifting over muddy waters, people kneeling before flickering candles inside a somber

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nave, the birds screeching in the twilight over the trees, and Mr. Priestley talking. A vague unease weighed on her mind as it followed each shifting episode, the unease born of a comprehension that somehow, insidiously, the things that happened, the things she had seen and felt, had wrought in her a puzzling and irreparable change.

* * *

She met Priestley the following morning as she sat in the plaza whiling away her last half-hour in Cuernavaca waiting for her bus. He approached her saying good morning, then asked if he could sit down. "I've been hoping to run into you again," he said. "In fact, I've been looking for you."

She assured him that she was very pleased to have this opportunity to see him before she left.

"Thank you," he said. "Though I wonder if you will be pleased a minute from now."

"Why, I don't understand," she said.

"It's that I've made up my mind to ask you for help." He looked at her squarely as he continued. "I am in a messy situation. Dreadfully in need of money—any amount of money you might be able or willing to spare. I won't try to arouse your compassion. I don't deserve it. I am not a victim of circumstance. I am essentially a pretty evil sort. I am not in Mexico on vacation. I am hiding here. I have swindled quite a few people out of their money—talked my way into their confidence. You have probably observed that I have a degree of imagination and a certain facility with words. Books, you know. Acquired the habit of reading in jail. But I am afraid I am not very skillful at begging. So I am speaking the truth. I know—I sense it somehow—that if you will help me

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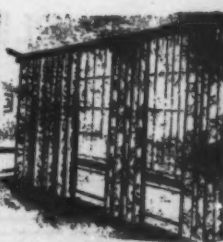
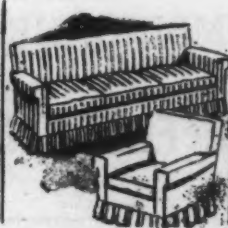
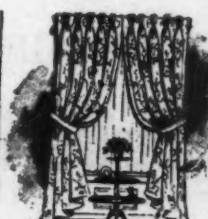
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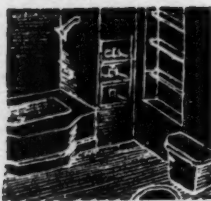
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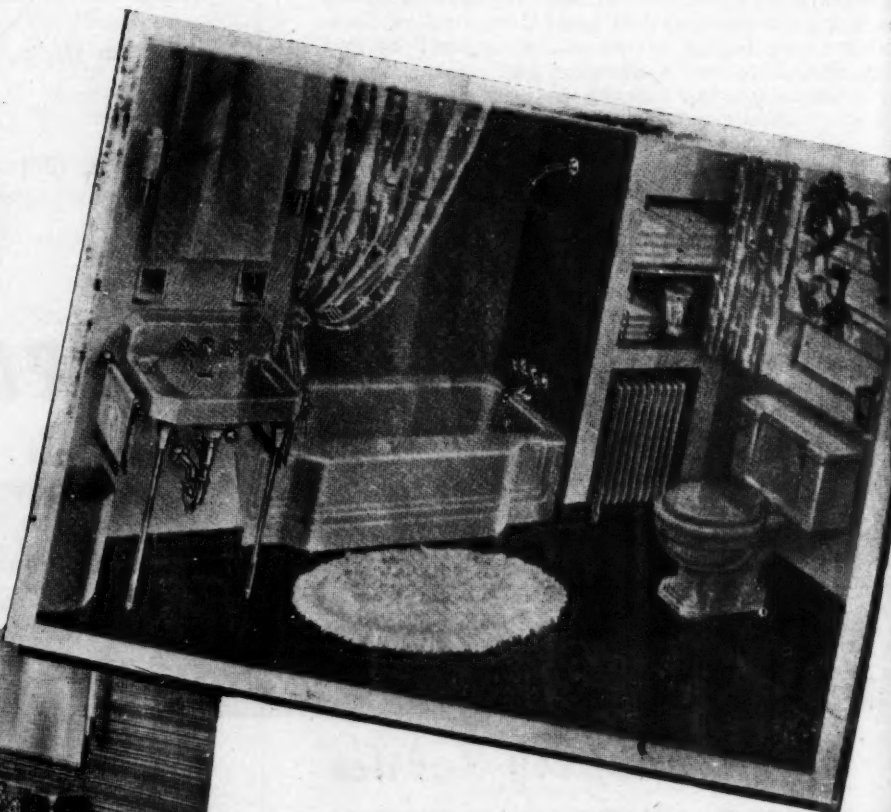




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you will do so not because I deserve it, but simply because you desire to help me."

Momentarily, Miss Prentiss met his gaze, a calm unwavering gaze without a trace of humility or pleading, then, lowering her head, thinking, this is the most preposterous, the most outrageous thing that ever happened, and muttering, "Why... I... why..." she commenced to fumble inside her purse. She took out a block of travelers' checks and swiftly computed in her mind the amount she would have to spend if she reduced her stay in Mexico City by several days. She surmised that with her round-trip ticket on the plane she had considerably more money than she actually needed. She unscrewed her pen and resting the block over her knee endorsed several of the checks.

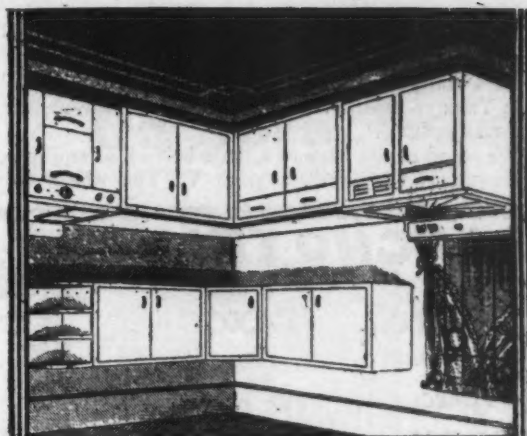
Folding the checks inside his coat pocket, Mr. Priestley rose from the bench. "I am sure you won't want to shake hands," he said. "But thanks. Thanks a lot and goodbye." She watched him as he walked briskly away from the plaza and turned down the nearest corner.

With the Artists...

Continued from page 18

small living-room done in masculine Rembrandt tones. Like a linked chain the house proceeded—a kitchen, two bedrooms, and a bath, all clinging to the sides of the ravine and edged with a balustraded gallery and belvederes with stone benches. It was at once spectacular and intimate. Across the emptiness, on the other loftier side of the barranca, rose an extraordinary three-storied stone ruin.

The cocktail party was in full swing when we arrived. So, happily, no one but the host and a young man from Ohio paid much attention to me, and I could gaze across the void to my heart's content. With its broken rows of platinum-colored arches silhouetted against the dark-green velvet of the slope, it



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was like some figment of dream architecture, as evocative as a setting for a poetic drama by Maeterlinck.

"It's really a relic of an eighteenth-century mill," Señora Tamayo said, "where the wheat for the nobles bread was ground."

We stood at the edge of a little belvedere and looked down into the ravine's great V. The whole view

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had a lyrical quality. A stream, concealed by profuse vegetation, made music playing on the rocks. And as the foliage began to stir with the breeze of late afternoon, I could imagine an orchestra tuning up for an operatic performance. A blue bird, the color of the sky, shot across my range of vision like the warning flash of a conductor's baton. In a moment romantic figures might emerge from behind the stone pillars and burst into a chorus. The tinkle of donkey bells from a drove passing on the road above us merged with a tinkle of glass on tin as Dickinson set a tray with cocktails on the white iron table beside us.

Only last month he had completed remodeling the stone cottage he had discovered and bought. The fixtures in the black-and-white tiled bathroom had just been installed. The bath had cost more than he paid for the dilapidated house and the land. For the house as it stood and the land down to the bottom of the barranca, he had paid the sum of ninety dollars. And recently he had bought the view, the ruins and the acres of hillside across the way, he said—for three hundred dollars. He had struck such a golden bargain because San Miguel is two hundred miles from Mexico City. It is too far for the millionaires of the capital to commute, as they do from Cuernavaca.

Guests sat on stone stairs, on balustrades, or stood about in the smallish drawing-room. Captain Esperón and two men students sat with Del Pomar's handsome wife at a painted iron table. A group of girl students gathered about Del Pomar by a pomegranate bush illuminated by the red stars of its own buds. The Tamayos and I took our glasses to a far edge of the gallery and sat on a stone bench facing the ruin. The shadows deepened in the ravine, and the scene took on an even more dream-stuff quality. I thought of what moonlight might do to it.

Buying on MERIT

In choosing "Mexican Life" as an advertising medium, keen-minded space-buyers have found that it meets fully two basic advertising requirements. Its circulation is composed of people with the financial ABILITY to buy something besides necessities -- and the experiences of other advertisers in selling is sufficient proof of their DESIRE to buy.

"San Miguel is a place where one can idle to some purpose," Señora Tamayo said at length.

"It's the only place we have seen in the world where we cared to build a house to call home," Tamayo said. "But we don't idle—we work."

"If it weren't for news of the outside world," his wife said, "one could exist here in a state of grace."

The perfume vials of the flowers in the little narrow garden directly beneath the balustrade seemed to have been unstopped by the approaching twilight. Fragrance rose like a mist. The sound of a cowbell now came drifting faintly from somewhere across the abyss, like a ghostly overtone. The deep blue of the firmament was being drawn closer to earth, as a tent is pegged down tightly against a windy night. Despite the hum of talk and desultory bursts of laughter behind us, the hour was so mellow it seemed it might dissolve between one's fingers. Tamayo gazed moodily toward the depths of the ravine, where the leafy boughs blanketed the stream. His lady raised her slim white hand from the stone ledge as if to caress some invisible thing in the air.

"Dinner waits. We should go." Señora del Pomar had joined us with invitation and reminder. We turned to make our adieus. Virtually everyone else had already disappeared. The host and the young man from Ohio were on the verge of tidying up. Never before had I been present at a cocktail party and so delightfully oblivious of it.

In Champerico . . .

Continued from page 16

for his usual week-end while a tourist boat was in port. A picturesque figure in his vaquero costume, he immediately attracted the attention of the visitors, who gathered round him, and through their interpreter, asked permission to take his picture. The interpreter spoke to the young man in Spanish, who replied in the same language, "Sí, como no" ("Sure, why not"). During the business of focussing the cameras, posing the subject, and so forth, the camera clickers talked among themselves. One woman protested to another, why waste time in taking a picture of the "dirty greaser"? An animal lover among them was sure that he must be cruel to his horses, she had "heard..." Some one else was sure that he wasn't too clean. (Cleanliness seems to be a pathological obsession with the tourists—and their only standard of virtue.)

When the American had had enough of it, he spoke to the interpreter, who in turn informed the crowd that the Guatemalan cowboy would like to borrow one of their cameras. A roar of protest went up

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at this. What did he want to borrow a camera for? The tanned young "cowboy" grinned as he answered his interrogators in good Americanese, "Oh, I'd just like to take a picture of the biggest bunch of goddamned fools I've ever seen!"

In the course of the next few weeks we travelled down the coast from port to port along the straight sand beaches of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. The breakers were huge and travelling was difficult. In the ports we missed the easy informality and cordiality that characterized life in Mexico. The smaller the country, the more soldiers were in evidence. All the piers were patrolled by heavily armed guards. In all the towns there were large garrisons of soldiers, and it was impossible to walk along the streets without seeing many of them. One felt that martial law was in force. Many of the soldiers carried machine guns or automatic rifles, and their officers were weighted down with heavy forty-fives. The officials were sticklers for regulations, and exceedingly suspicious of travellers. In most places the authorities were civil, but seldom cordial.

En route to Corinto, Nicaragua, we ran into a storm; the wind was almost of hurricane strength, and the canoe took an awful beating. By the time we reached Cardon Channel outside Corinto, she was badly battered and leaking. Pulling in behind Cardon Island, which forms one side of Corinto harbour, we washed and changed into our shore clothes before paddling on to the dock at Corinto. The canoe was in bad shape, so we hoisted both our "protest" and quarantine flags. Officers soon arrived, who motioned us away from the pier. We waited half an hour for the Port Captain, who instructed us to come round to the landing. We pulled round to the small bay back of the dock, but as we started to land, the Captain motioned us away from the steps.

Take No Chances

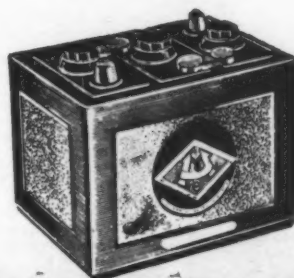
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Eventually an officer came down the steps, and asked to see our papers. After much hesitation and conferring among themselves, the port officials finally decided that we should be given permission to land, although they were anything but enthusiastic.

American adventurers are no novelty in Corinto. The town was long occupied by the United States marines, and most of the natives speak a few words of English. Americans seem to be generally disliked; and from the town's attitude towards us we might have been poison. Whether this attitude is entirely due to contact with American military forces is hard to say. The average native reminded us of a stick of dynamite, walking round while waiting to explode.

We spent ten days in Corinto repairing the boat. At first we were unable to find a place to stay; the Nicaraguans would have none of us, and we camped on the edge of the jungle. Then we passed by a sailboat under construction on the beach; and being interested in small boats, went over to look at it. A big, rawboned white man was working away. He was a Dane named Charley Neilson, who was engaged in the boat-building business. He lived with his father and one unmarried brother in a wing of the ramshackle marine barracks. When we told him about the condition of the Vagabunda, he at once offered us his tools and such materials as we needed. The old barracks was all but uninhabitable, so he suggested that we use a twenty-foot sloop that was pulled up on the beach, resting on stilts.

We had tried to purchase paint and other materials in Corinto, but they were either not to be had,



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or we were asked to pay about ten times the usual price for them. Consequently we were more than glad to offer the Neilsons payment for the things we needed, but they would not accept money. Then Ginger found that they had been eating in a restaurant where they got nothing but corn, beans, and rice. From then on she took charge of the culinary arrangements. Every day she went to the market for fresh fruits and vegetables, which she converted into some of the delicious recipes that she had developed on the trail. The men were delighted.

At first Ginger had a difficult time in the mercado. All the natives were out to skin the whites, and prices bounded sky-high the moment she appeared. But a big, fat woman, invariably dressed in black despite the heat, took a liking to her, and helped her with the buying. Ginger would tell her what she wanted, and the woman would go round to the various vendors, haggling until she brought the price down to its customary level. But on the day the tourist boats appeared most of the natives went down to the pier with their produce; and then no one in Corinto could buy avocados and other fruit except at gringo tourist prices. Ginger went down to the dock on one occasion, hoping to buy some avocados, since none remained in the mercado. There she found the native women that she knew selling them on the sidewalk. She asked the price of the fruit. They were twenty-five centavos (ten cents gold) today, she was informed. "But," she protested, "you sell them to me every day for three or four centavos." Yes, and they sold them to her gladly at that price, the women answered; but today the tourist boat was in, and the price was what the tourist would pay—twenty-five centavos.

The Salvador came into port while we were in Corinto, and we had a reunion with Captain Grant and

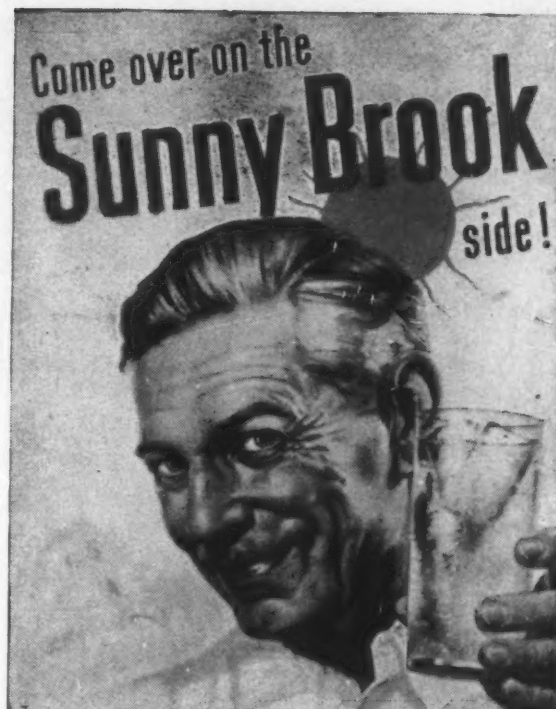


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the crew that lasted all night. Then the Port Captain decided that we might be nice people, so he gave a cocktail party for us at which we met and really got to know the officials. They stretched a point and permitted us to stay in port after the boat was repaired until the weather became calm enough to travel. The long jump from Corinto to San Juan del Sur worried us considerably, for the wind and weather had been consistently bad for days.

The Collective Ejido...

Continued from page 14

Banco Ejidal representative sends a weekly summary of work to the bank headquarters, where records are compared with past performance and with those of other ejidos.

Obviously, few of the ejidatarios were prepared for such fundamental measures of democratic control over their economic activities. The Banco Ejidal has been charged by the President with furnishing the technical guidance they would need, as well as credit.

The cry was raised immediately that the Bank was to be a dictator over the ejidatarios. A common expression heard by the writer during a visit to the region six months after the expropriations was, "The peasants will soon learn they have exchanged their old bosses for a single new one. And the new one will be impersonal and heartless, the personal bond between the owner and his people will no longer protect them." Two business men in Torreón and one in Saltillo made the same prophecy. "Give them two years and they'll crawl on their hands and knees begging to be put back to work for their old employers," was the prophecy freely made. The prophets have been proved too optimistic on both counts.

The record of the Banco Ejidal is by no means spotless. However, from the first it has consistently endeavored to train the ejidatarios to accept more responsibility. The new financial institution had the bad luck to be called a bank, and therefore it is widely expected to follow orthodox banking procedure.

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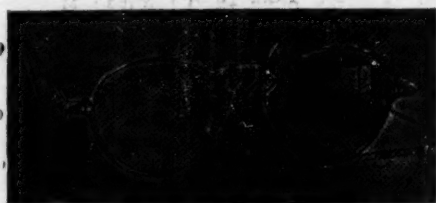
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The organization department supervises the creation of new ejidal credit societies and the functioning of those which already exist. It also makes studies of ways in which community organization

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may be improved. It has the responsibility for the promotion of consumers' cooperative stores. The functions of the legal, bookkeeping and administrative services departments are selfevident.

The federal government had to provide all of the funds originally, but in recent years private funds have been available for the collectivized ejidos, although such funds are rarely lent to the old-style parcelized communities. Recovery on loans has improved steadily, except for the crisis seasons of 1940-41 and 1945-46 when lack of water caused widespread loss of crops. The bank reports that it recovered ninety-five per cent of its loans over the first decade.

The system of compensation used in the collectivized ejidos is complicated and ingenious. There are three principal methods of remuneration. The first is based on the skill required for the work done in the preparing of the fields, in cultivating and in harvesting. Each ejido determines, within the limits of its own financial situation, the rates to be paid. Generally the field laborer gets one and a half or two pesos per day. Tractor mechanics, pump operators and other semi-skilled workers and the work-chief receive from three to five pesos.

During the cotton picking season piece rates are paid. Generally the entire family participates in the field work. The third method is used after the crops have been sold. When the ejido operates with the Banco Ejidal the bank sells the crops, deducts the seasonal loan, a per cent of any longer term loan and any other charges. The ejido deducts a fund for community purposes and then distributes the remainder to its members. The basis is the number of man hours worked during the season, irrespective of the amount

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which was received for the work at the time it was done. Each ejido decides on the basis of its own needs and the available funds whether all of the money is to be distributed to the members or whether sums above those legally required are to be utilized for some special community project.

A new system made its appearance in the region in 1941. It was worked out in some of the ejidos in which there was a fairly well defined group of active and energetic members and another group of members who did not take their work so seriously. Under the new system collective work is done as before, up to and including the planting of the cotton. Then the members draw lots for sections of the land. From that time on the sections are cultivated and harvested either individually or by family-groups. Day rates are paid during the first period. The individuals or small groups working their allotted divisions are on the basis of production on these divisions. While the system introduces an additional complication into the internal organization of the ejidos, its inventors claim that it will result in greater production and will not penalize the better workers as the previous system did. During recent seasons it is estimated that almost ninety per cent of the ejidos in the region had adopted this system.

The "mixed" system, as it is known in the region, has led to many complications. Several ejidos have been split as groups formed to attempt to secure rights to a particularly rich area in the ejidal lands. The Unión Central, the organization of the ejidatarios, has denounced officials of the bank for promoting dissension which leads to the formation of several sectors within an ejido. Officially the bank followed a "hands off" policy. The individual working of plots has made cotton theft and the illegal traffic in unginned cotton much easier. It has made the book-keeping of both bank and ejido more involved.

Recently the Unión Central has become much more open in its criticism of the new system. It is en-

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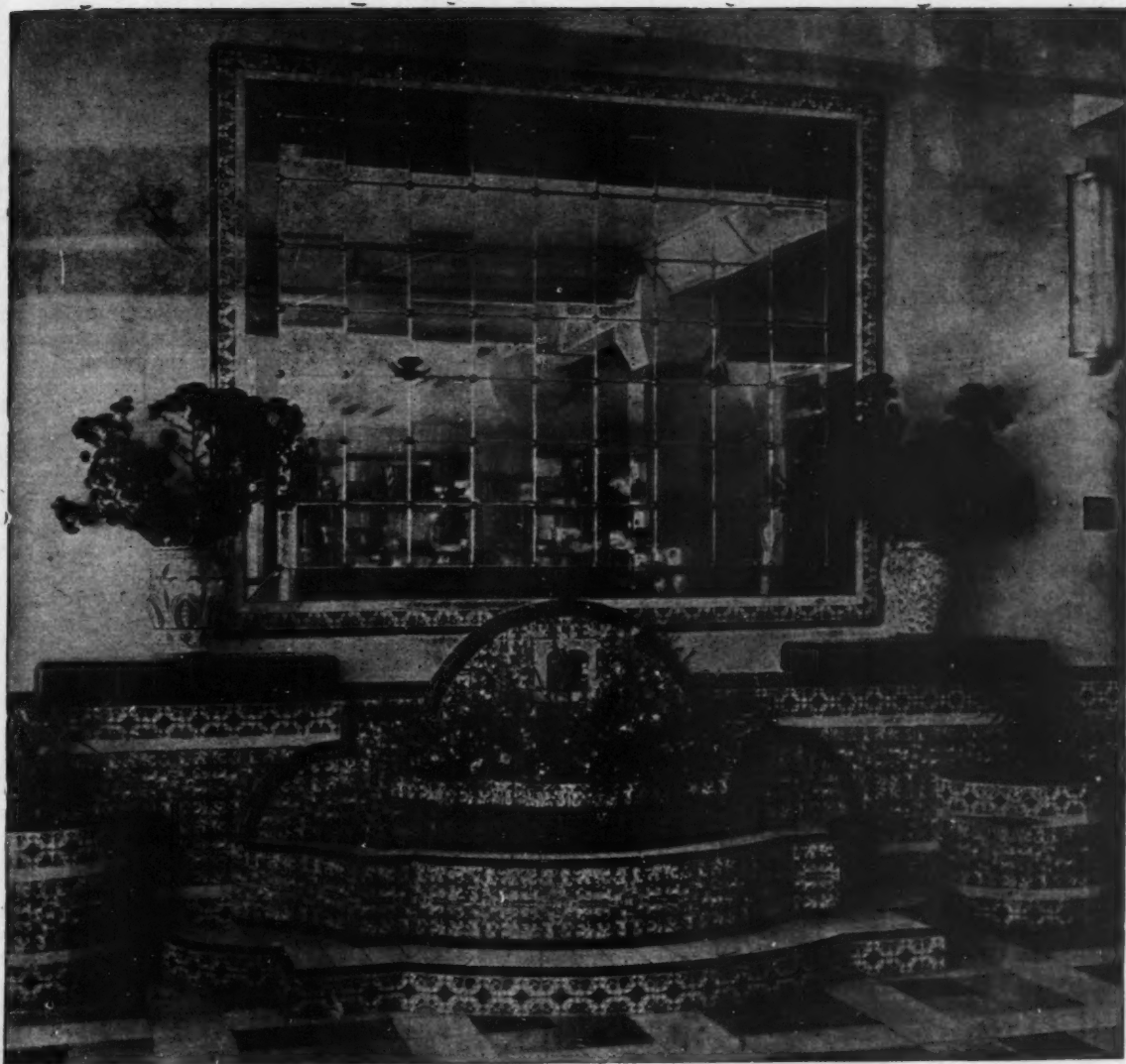
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deavoring to show the ejidatarios the dangers of continued division within their ranks. They are able to cite several examples of ejidos which had been making profits until they divided into sectors. The losses then brought the members to their senses and the reunited group was again making money. The technical requirements of successful wheat raising are such that the system is feasible only in cotton and in small crop cultivation. This fact alone may hold in check any widespread attempt to wreck the large-scale nature of the agriculture of the region.

No valid generalization can be made which would fit every ejido. Some have prospered in every way and have made good use of good land and available water. At the other extreme are the ejidos which have had irrigation water less than half the seasons since the expropriations. Seven villages which were unable to water their lands for four successive years have been visited from year to year by the writer. The ejidatarios work on other lands as day laborers or try to secure employment in the towns or cities. Other ejidos have been partial failures even though they had land and water. Some failed until a trouble-making minority was eliminated, and then improved markedly.

The bank has divided all the ejidos working with it into three groups. Group A normally pays its debts and distributes profits to its members. Group B contains societies that for special reasons were in arrears, but have removed the causes of their delinquency and are now making current payments, plus installments on back debts. Group C consists of poor ejidos that do not pay their debts, but that the bank is trying to put on their feet by securing more or better land elsewhere or by aiding them to reorganize and improve their work. The three groups represent fifty-nine, twenty-nine and twelve per cent of the total, respectively.

The average daily income from wheat and cotton was officially estimated at 2.25 pesos (\$.45) in 1938, 3.04 pesos (\$.61) in 1939, and 4.25 pesos (\$.88) in 1945. The best societies average around twice that amount. Additional income is found for the group in the sale of alfalfa, grapes or other crops not financed by the bank and for the individual in the sale of truck from garden plots or or chickens or goats. There is also considerable social income in community services, such as education, drinking water, medical service and recreation, that are paid for by the group before the distribution of profits. It is

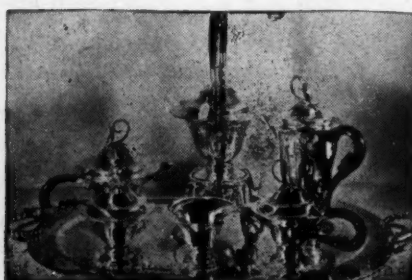
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probably safe to say that the average total income has increased about fourfold.

The economic situation will not be improved further for the "average" ejidatario until the amount of land at his disposal is increased and improved and until an adequate supply of water is assured. The recent completion of the Lázaro Cárdenas dam will help solve the latter problem. The former is one of the knottiest problems of the region and will not be solved soon.

There are noteworthy advances in democratic organization to be recorded, in addition to the raising of incomes. The Central Union of ejidatarios was organized to give the peasants a voice in regional affairs. It made such an important contribution to Mexican agrarian developments that the national agrarian code was amended to give it legal personality and increased powers and responsibilities. Similar groups were organized in other regions. It is now authorized to borrow and lend money and carry on other banking operations. It may create commercial or industrial organizations for the handling, classification, packing, sale or processing of farm products on behalf of its member societies. It may buy for and distribute to its members, seeds, breeding or work animals, tools, fertilizer and machinery and may construct or purchase and administer warehouses, elevators, dams, canals or wells. It has the power to sell its own bonds, to obtain the money needed for the variety of activities it may carry out. It also represents its associates in subjects involving municipal state, or federal governments and may mediate in conflicts between or within its member societies.

That the Laguna peasants are learning to accept increased responsibilities is demonstrated in several ways. When the bank agency was opened the books of all the ejidos were kept in the Torreón office. Members had to travel as far as fifty or sixty miles to see their accounts. The bank announced that this was a purely temporary arrangement which would be changed when the ejidatarios themselves could supply competent bookkeepers. The bank created short courses in the fundamentals of accountancy and a course in the subject was offered at the regional agricultural schools founded shortly after the expropriations. The books were moved to the zone offices in 1940 and ejidatarios were the bookkeepers. By 1947 two thirds of the ejidos were keeping their own books.

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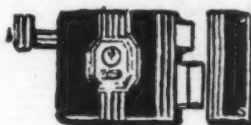
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A similar course of action was followed with cotton and cotton-seed classifiers and water gaugers. Each year since 1936 a group of the most intelligent and best prepared ejidatarios, together with a small number of bank employees from various cotton regions, have attended courses in cotton and cottonseed classification at Texas State Agricultural and Mechanical College. Water gaugers are trained locally.

The Central Union now has a staff of expert accountants, classifiers and gaugers who themselves educate other ejidatarios in those techniques. The members now participate not only in discussions of generalities but have their own trained representatives on the committees that decide upon the amount of water to be distributed in the principal and secondary canals. They also are involved, along with representatives of the private property growers and the government, in classification of cotton and cottonseed. The Union and the Bank joined in establishing a mutual hail and frost insurance system now run by the ejidatarios. It is expanding to other regions. The Central Union has plans for adding agronomic and construction engineers, irrigation specialists and a full-time attorney to its present corps.

The experience of the first ten years under the new system demonstrates that when the bank and the government are sincere in their belief in democracy and use competent technicians and when peasants are well organized, a functional economic democracy can grow. Increased responsibility has been undertaken by the ejidatarios. They now sit on local, regional and national committees discussing and acting on public affairs. They participate in campaigns against illiteracy or for an expansion of the electricity generating facilities. They act upon matters of credit, taxes, crop insurance, cotton exports, water rights, diversification, industrialization, education and medical services.

In the Laguna region the pioneers of the new times have built one of the world's largest examples of democratic collectivism. Other lands have attempted to solve agrarian problems by forcing peasants into new type farms at the point of a gun. Mexico allows her peasants to debate and decide their forms of organization for themselves. They grow in stature as they do so.

Garden of Etna...

Continued from page 12

my wife as we were travelling by bus from Cuernavaca to the City of Oaxaca nine years later, with the important collateral object of trying to locate Fer-

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MEXICAN LIFE

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nando himself, whom I had lost touch with during the war.

I know nothing to compare with the approach to Oaxaca over the mountains, by bus, with the fresh wind blowing through the windows, and over the new highway. There is probably the most tremendous sense of space to be obtained anywhere in the world. Range after range after jagged remote range stretch for hundreds of miles in every direction. Not even on the sea, or on the prairie, not even in Canada, do you get such a feeling of boundless immeasurable space as this; and the mystery is all the greater because in some of these most apparently inaccessible places, people live.

In Oaxaca, later that night, we saw, from the roof of the Hotel Francia (where D. H. Lawrence once wrote a famous letter to Middleton Murray), high above, the dimly castellated outline of Monte Alban.

The next morning we discovered that Fernando had been dead for five years, having died far from home in Villahermosa, Tabasco.

That afternoon we went up a hot road to the summit of Monte Alban and walked into the ruin of the antique city.

Below us the valley spread out with a river and sweet green fields, and villages, deep in trees, each village marked by a church spire, and all around stood the mountains, the nearest with their indentations shadowed, like great gods with their hands upon their knees.

To the left we saw the highway we had traversed the previous day, talking of Fernando and our hopes of seeing him. Ahead of us the road ran on through the valley to Mitla, where we had planned to go with him if possible, and where in fact we did go the following day, and drank, in that same restaurant, exactly the same sort of gale blowing outside, a mescal to him, pouring a few drops on the earth; as later, we lit a candle, for him in the Church of the Soledad, which I remembered he never passed.

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Sorrow had to be in its proper place. Yet at the moment no one ever seemed less dead than Fernando Atonalzin. It seemed actually an impertinence to mourn, even though one could not help it. And suddenly I remembered something I'd forgotten to say in that restaurant in the course of that conversation eight years (and now it is thirteen years) before: "The sense of time is an inhibition to prevent everything happening at once."

The remark, or so claimed the source I mentally borrowed it from, is Bergson's. I wondered if it would have seemed too "formidable" for Fernando, not impersonal enough. I felt I could hear him chuckling, and I doubt whether he would have accepted the romance of the thoughts which it aroused, though here, if anywhere in this hemisphere, was the place to meditate upon it.

But Fernando would not have failed to grant such a feeling to the people present, for what they would make of it, nor the hope for man it might further engender here in this fertile Valley of Etla, as we stood gazing over it, as eternally gazes the statue of Juárez, while far below and in the utmost distance, as if seen from a colossal mirador, seemed all Mexico itself; standing there with treasures rich as those of ancient Egypt beneath our feet within those tombs containing crowns and feathers of gold, pearl, turquoise—stood, in the terrific shadow of the past, the remote little farms he had served climbing the hillsides, the bell-haunted city of Oaxaca below, at the seat and resting place of the Zapotecan Kings.

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